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SHAKESPEARE

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A SUMMER NIGHT'S
DREAM

EDITED BY

WILLIAM ALDIS WRIGHT, M.A.

HON. D.C.L. AND F.R.S.

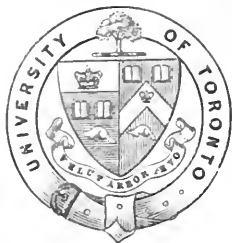
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FELLOW AND SENIOR BURSAR OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

Oxford

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

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P R E F A C E.

The first edition of this play was issued in quarto in 1600 by Thomas Fisher, under the title 'A Midsommer nights dreame. As it hath beene sundry times publickely acted, by the Right honourable, the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants. Written by William Shakespeare.' It was entered at Stationers' Hall on the 8th of October, and in the same year a pirated edition by James Roberts appeared. Fisher's and Roberts's editions are spoken of in the Notes as the first and second quartos, and from the latter of these the play as it appears in the first folio was printed in 1623. But although it was not printed, so far as we know, before 1600, it was written at least as early as 1598, for 'Midsummers Night Dreame' is enumerated among Shakespeare's plays by Francis Meres in his *Palladis Tamia* (p. 282), which was published in that year. How long before this time it had been written is to a great extent a matter of pure conjecture. Steevens, in his note on ii. i. 15, 'And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear,' quotes a passage in which the same thought occurs from an old comedy called *The Wisdom of Doctor Dodypoll*, 1600, where an enchanter says:—

'Twas I that led you through the painted meads
When the light fairies danc'd upon the flowers,
Hanging on every leaf an orient pearl.'

Malone pointed out that although no earlier edition is known of this anonymous comedy than that of 1600 yet Doctor Dodi-powle is mentioned by Nashe in 1596, in his preface to Gabriel Harvey's *Hunt is Up*. This however proves nothing, for Nashe

only mentions the name 'doctor Dodypowle,' without referring to the play, and Dodipoll was a synonym for a blockhead as early as Latimer's time. In endeavouring therefore to approximate to the date of our play, we may leave out of consideration the passage quoted by Steevens; for it is, to say the least, quite as probable that the author of the *Wisdom of Doctor Dodypoll* borrowed from the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, as that Shakespeare borrowed from him a conceit which is not very far-fetched. All that we really know is that the *Midsummer Night's Dream* was written before 1598. Chetwood, in his *British Theatre*, published in Dublin in 1750, gives a list of the early editions of Shakespeare's plays, in which appears 'A moste pleasaunte comedie, called A *Midsummer Night's Dreame*, wythe the freakes of the fayries,' which is said to have been published in 1595. But Chetwood's descriptions have been pronounced fictitious by Steevens, and the spelling of 'wythe' is sufficient to condemn the present title as spurious. Malone at first placed the *Midsummer Night's Dream* in the year 1595, then as early as 1592, but his later opinion was that it was written in 1594. In that year Dr. King, afterwards Bishop of London, preached at York a series of sermons upon the history of Jonah, which were published in 1618 under the title 'Lectures upon Ionas.' The second lecture (p. 36) contains a description of the disastrous season, to which Titania is supposed to refer in her reproaches of Oberon (ii. 1. 81-117), and which she attributes to their quarrel. 'The moneths of the year haue not yet gone about, wherein the Lord hath bowed the heauens, and come down amongst vs with more tokens and earnestes of his wrath intended, then the agedst man of our land is able to recount of so small a time. For say, if euer the windes, since they blew one against the other, haue beene more common, & more tempestuous, as if the foure endes of heauen had conspired to turne the foundations of the earth vpside downe; thunders and lightnings neither seasonable for the time, and withall most terrible, with such effects brought

forth, that the childe vnborne shall speake of it. The anger of the clouds hath beene powred downe vpon our heads, both with abundance and (sauing to those that felt it) with incredible violence; the aire threatned our miseries with a blazing starre; the pillers of the earth tottered in many whole countries and tracts of our Ilande; the arrowes of a woefull pestilence haue beene cast abroad at large in all the quarters of our realme, euen to the emptying and dispeopling of some parts thereof; treasons against our Queene and countrey wee have knowne many and mighty, monstrous to bee imagined, from a number of Lyons whelps, lurking in their dennes and watching their houre, to vndoe vs; our expectation and comfort so fayled vs in France, as if our right armes had beene pulled from our shoulders.' The marginal note to this passage shews the date to which it refers. 'The yeare of the Lord 1593, and 1594.' Dr. King's description of the extraordinary disturbance of the elements is confirmed by Stowe in his Annals for the same year. Under date 1594 he says, 'In this moneth of March was many great stormes of winde, which ouerturned trees, steeples, barns, houses, &c. namely in Worcestershire, in Beandly forrest many Oakes were ouerturned . . . The 11. of Aprill, a raine continued very sore more then 24. houres long and withall, such a winde from the north, as peaced the wals of houses, were they neuer so strong . . . This yeere in the month of May, fell many great showres of raine, but in the moneths of Iune and Iuly, much more: for it commonly rained euerie day, or night, till S. Iames day, and two daies after together most extreamly, all which notwithstanding, in the moneth of August there followed a faire haruest, but in the moneth of September fell great raines, which raised high waters, such as staid the carriages, and bare downe bridges, at Cambridge, Ware, and else where, in many places. Also the price of graine grewe to be such, as a strike or bushell of Rie was sold for fiue shillings, a bushel of wheat for sixe, seuen, or eight shillings, &c. for still it rose in price, which dearth happened (after

the common opinion) more by meanes of ouermuch transporting, by our owne merchants for their priuate gaine, than through the vnseasonablenesse of the weather passed.' (Annales, ed. 1601, pp. 1274-9). A similar description is given in the journal of Dr. Simon Forman, the astrologer, which is quoted by Mr. Halliwell (Phillipps) in his Introduction to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (p. 6, ed. 1841), from MS. 384 in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. These passages have been so often referred to as containing the prose version of Titania's speech that I have thought it best to give them at length, if only for the purpose of shewing that in all probability Shakespeare had not the year 1594 in his mind at all. It is true that King, and Stowe, and Forman alike describe great storms of wind and rain and disastrous floods as characterising this year, but notwithstanding we are told 'in the moneth of August there followed a faire haruest,' and the subsequent high prices of corn are attributed not to a deficiency in the crop but to the avarice of merchants in exporting it for their own gain. Now this does not agree with Titania's description of the fatal consequences of her quarrel with Oberon, through which

'The green corn
Hath rotted, ere his youth attain'd a beard.'

In this point alone there is such an important discrepancy that if Shakespeare referred to any particular season we may without doubt affirm it was not to the year 1594, and therefore the passages which have been quoted have no bearing upon the date of the play. I am even sceptical enough to think that Titania's speech not only does not describe the events of the year 1594, or of the other bad seasons which happened at this time, but that it is purely the product of the poet's own imagination, and that the picture which it presents had no original in the world of fact, any more than Oberon's bank or Titania's bower.

Another passage which has been appealed to as afford-

ing internal evidence of the date of our play is in v. i. 52, 53, where Theseus reads from the list of performances submitted to him for approval by the master of the revels,

‘The thrice three Muses mourning for the death
Of learning, late deceased in beggary’;

in which some see an allusion to the death of Spenser in 1599, others to that of Greene in 1592. In the former case the lines must have been interpolated after Spenser’s death, for we know the play was in existence in 1598. It was Knight who first suggested that the reference is to the death of Greene. Rejecting the supposition of Warton that Shakespeare here ‘alluded to Spenser’s poem entitled “The Teares of the Muses, on the neglect and contempt of learning,”’ which appeared in 1591, he maintains, ‘These expressions are too precise and limited to refer to the tears of the Muses for the decay of knowledge and art. We cannot divest ourselves of the belief that some real person, and some real death, was alluded to. May we hazard a conjecture? Greene, a man of learning, and one whom Shakspeare in the generosity of his nature might wish to point at kindly, died in 1592, in a condition that might truly be called beggary. But how was his death, any more than that of Spenser, to be the occasion of “some satire keen and critical”? Every student of our literary history will remember the famous controversy of Nash and Gabriel Harvey, which was begun by Harvey’s publication, in 1592, of “Four Letters, and certain Sonnets, especially touching Robert Greene, and other parties by him abused.” Robert Greene was dead; but Harvey came forward, in revenge of an incautious attack of the unhappy poet, to satirize him in his grave—to hold up his vices and his misfortunes to the public scorn—to be “keen and critical” upon “learning, late deceas’d in beggary.” The conjecture which we offer may have little weight, and the point is certainly of very small consequence.’ It may safely be said that the conjecture would have had more weight if the reasons

for it had not been given, for it is difficult to see any parallel between Gabriel Harvey's satire and

‘The thrice three Muses mourning for the death
Of learning,’

which must of necessity satirize some person or persons other than him whose death is mourned, even supposing that any particular person is referred to. On the whole, I am inclined to think that Spenser's poem may have suggested to Shakespeare a title for the piece submitted to Theseus, and that we need not press for any closer parallel between them.

Chalmers, in his Supplemental Apology for the Believers in the Shakspeare-Papers (pp. 359-370), gives the reasons which induced him to place the composition of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* in the early part of 1598. He finds, in the speech of Theseus at the beginning of the fifth act, the line,

‘One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,’

which, he says, ‘is, plainly, a sarcasm on Lodge's pamphlet, called *Wits Miserie, and the Worlds Madnesse*; discovering the Incarnate Devils of this age.’ Lodge's tract was printed in 1596, and as he mentions other poets and suppresses Shakespeare's name Chalmers infers that Shakespeare in revenge wrote the line which is quoted above. An equally strong reason for believing that Shakespeare had read Lodge's tract before writing *Midsummer Night's Dream*, is that he uses the word ‘compact,’ which is also found in Lodge.

The next step in Chalmers's argument is that in 1597 there was a poem, entitled *Pyramus and Thisbe*, published by Dunstan Gale, which in his opinion was prior to Shakespeare's work. But as no one has seen this edition of Gale's poem, and as the story of *Pyramus and Thisbe* was accessible to Shakespeare from other sources long before 1597, we may dismiss this piece of evidence brought forward by Chalmers as having no decisive weight. He next takes for granted what is merely suggested by Malone, that Shakespeare borrowed from a comedy called the *Wisdom of Doctor Dodipoll*, and

further that this comedy was published in, or before, the year 1596. I have given reasons above for believing that this suggestion also may be disregarded. Again, says Chalmers, 'The Faery Queen helped Shakspeare to many hints,' and 'the second volume of the Faery Queen was published in 1596.' To this I would add, what Chalmers himself should have stated, that although the second volume of Spenser's poem was not published till 1596, the first appeared in 1590, and if Shakespeare borrowed any ideas from it at all he had an opportunity of doing so long before 1596. This therefore may be consigned to the limbo of worthless evidence. Further, in the speech of Egeus, in which he claims the ancient privilege of Athens, to dispose of his daughter either to Demetrius or to death, Chalmers sees a direct reference to a bill which was introduced into parliament in 1597 for depriving offenders of clergy who should be found guilty of taking away women against their wills. This is certainly the weakest of all the proofs by which Chalmers endeavours to make out his case, for the law which Egeus wished to enforce was against a refractory daughter, who at the time at which he was speaking had not been stolen away by Lysander, and was only too willing to go with him. I have given Chalmers's theory rather more consideration than it deserves, because he has supported it by a parade of evidence, which to him no doubt appeared satisfactory, but which upon examination proves to be of absolutely no value.

Another point, which has a bearing upon the date of the play, is the occasion for which it was written. If this could be determined with any degree of probability we should be able to ascertain within a little the time at which it was composed. But here again we embark upon a wide sea of conjecture, with neither star nor compass to guide us. That the *Midsummer Night's Dream* may have been first acted at the marriage of some nobleman, and that, from the various compliments which are paid to Elizabeth, the performance may have taken place when the Queen herself was present,

are no improbable suppositions. But when was this conjuncture of events? No theory which has yet been proposed satisfies both conditions. On the one hand Mr. Gerald Massey maintains that it was to celebrate the marriage of Lord Southampton with Elizabeth Vernon that Shakespeare composed the *Midsummer Night's Dream*; but as this marriage did not take place till 1598, and was then kept secret in order to avoid the Queen's displeasure, Mr. Massey supposes that the play was written some time before, when it was thought probable that the Queen's consent might have been obtained, and he accordingly places it in 1595. He goes further and believes that in the play 'many touches tend to show that *Hermia* is *Lady Rich*, and *Helena*, *Elizabeth Vernon*' (*The Secret Drama of Shakespeare's Sonnets unfolded*, p. 475). 'Perhaps,' he adds in a note (p. 481), 'it was one of the Plays presented before Mr. Secretary Cecil and Lord Southampton, when they were leaving London for Paris, in January, 1598, at which time, as Rowland White relates, the Earl's marriage was secretly talked of.' It appears that the exigencies of Mr. Massey's theory have here driven him into great straits. That Southampton was not married to Elizabeth Vernon till the summer of 1598, is all but certain. If therefore the *Midsummer Night's Dream* was one of the plays acted before Cecil and Southampton in January, 1598, it was not in honour of the marriage of the latter. If it was not one of these plays we are not concerned with what happened on that occasion. In fact we know nothing whatever about the matter, and of guesses like these there is neither end nor profit. Elze, who rejects the date offered by Mr. Massey's theory as too late, advances a conjecture of his own which must be regarded as a conjecture only, having no evidence whatever to support it. To use his own language, he maintains that 'all indications point to the fact that the *Midsummer Night's Dream* was written for and performed at the marriage of the Earl of Essex in 1590' with *Lady Frances Sidney* the widow of *Sir Philip Sidney*. He regards *Theseus* and *Hippolyta* as the

representatives of the bridal couple. Theseus was a captain, so was Essex. Theseus was a huntsman, so may Essex have been. Theseus was welcomed by 'great clerks'; Essex had an Eclogue Gratulatory addressed to him by George Peele on his return from the Spanish campaign in 1589. Theseus was faithless in love, and the amours of Essex were matters of public notoriety. So, there being a river at Monmouth and a river in Macedon, the parallel is complete. Moreover, Kurz, who adopts Elze's hypothesis and thinks that the *Midsummer Night's Dream* was performed, 'not on the marriage-day itself but on the May-day festival which followed close afterwards,' looking in the calendar found out moonshine, and ascertained that there was a new moon on April 30, 1590, giving thereby an unexpected significance to the introductory lines of the play¹. We have but to take another step on this baseless ladder and we find the Essex hypothesis explains, what has been hitherto unproved, how it was that Shakespeare enjoyed the early patronage of Essex, and who it was that introduced him to Southampton. It was the performance which 'must necessarily have drawn the attention of Essex to the poet,' and 'it is now beyond all doubt' that Essex brought him to the notice of Southampton. In such questions it would be well to remember the maxim of the ancient rabbis, 'Teach thy tongue to say, I do not know.'

If we attempt to arrange the plays which Meres attributes to Shakespeare, so as to distribute them over the period from 1589 to 1598, we shall find two gaps, in either of which we might conjecturally place the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. The interval from 1589 to 1591 is filled up by *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Comedy of Errors*, and *Titus Andronicus*. In 1593, 1594 are placed Richard

¹ But in the play the new moon is on Theseus' wedding day, that is, the 1st of May; and the kindness of Professor Adams enables me to state that the nearest new moon to May 1, 1590, was on April 23, and that there was a new moon on May 1 in 1592.

the Second, Richard the Third, King John, and in these years appeared Venus and Adonis and Lucrece. The Merchant of Venice is assigned to 1596, and Henry the Fourth to 1597. Besides these there are the three Parts of Henry the Sixth, which Meres does not mention, but which, if Shakespeare's at all, must belong to the earlier part of this period, and 'Loue Labours Wonne,' whatever this may have been. On the whole, I am disposed to agree with Professor Dowden in regarding the Two Gentlemen of Verona as earlier than the Midsummer Night's Dream, while I cannot think the latter was composed after the plays assigned above to 1593, 1594, and would therefore place it in the interval from 1591 to 1593, when perhaps Romeo and Juliet may have been begun.

But if conjecture has dealt freely with the indeterminate problem of the date and first occasion of our play, these speculations are outdone by the theories which have been advanced to explain the famous speech of Oberon to Puck (ii. 1. 148-168), regarded as a political allegory. Warburton was the first to propound an elaborate interpretation from this point of view. Starting with the assumption that by the 'fair vestal throned by the west' is meant Queen Elizabeth, he argues that the mermaid must denote some eminent personage of her time, 'of whom it had been inconvenient for the author to speak openly, either in praise or dispraise.' 'All this agrees with Mary Queen of Scots, and with no other. Queen Elizabeth could not bear to hear her commended; and her successor would not forgive her satirist.' 'She is called a *mermaid*, 1. To denote her reign over a kingdom situate in the sea, and 2. Her beauty and intemperate lust.' That she was on a dolphin's back points to her marriage with the dauphin of France. 'Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,' alludes to her great abilities and learning which rendered her the most accomplished princess of her age. The rude sea which grew civil at her song was 'Scotland encircled with the ocean, which rose up in arms against the regent while she was in France. But her return home

presently quieted those disorders.' The 'certain stars' who shot madly from their spheres were some of the English nobility who espoused her cause; 'the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, who fell in her quarrel; and principally the great Duke of Norfolk, whose projected marriage with her was attended with such fatal consequences.' Such is the elaborate allegory which Warburton finds concealed in the fanciful description given by Oberon of the origin of the flower by means of whose magical properties he wished to revenge himself upon Titania. That in the fair vestal throned by the west Shakespeare intended a compliment to Queen Elizabeth is probably the only part of Warburton's theory with which any one will agree. Ritson and others have pointed out important discrepancies in his interpretation which is really not worth serious investigation. But Warburton is outdone by Boaden, who in his *Essay on the Sonnets of Shakespeare* (1837) finds in Oberon's description of the mermaid no royal siren like Mary Queen of Scots, but the sham mermaid of the Princely Pleasures at Kenilworth when Elizabeth paid her famous visit to Leicester in 1575. Shakespeare was then a boy of eleven, and we are told *may* have been present as a delighted spectator. His childhood recollection of the pageant takes the form some fifteen or twenty years afterwards in which it now appears. Oberon speaks of a mermaid on a dolphin's back, and at Kenilworth there was Triton in the likeness of a mermaid, and Proteus appeared sitting on a dolphin's back, 'within the which dolphyn,' says Gascoigne, 'a consort of musicke was secretly placed,' which of course is in plain prose the dulcet and harmonious breath of which Oberon describes the wondrous effects. The 'certain stars' which shot madly from their spheres are according to this interpretation no misguided nobles rushing upon their own destruction, but the fireworks which accompanied the royal entertainment. Surely no fireworks before or since have been so glorified. Finally, misled by the magic of Sir Walter Scott, the author of this theory identifies as 'the little

western flower' poor Amy Robsart, who had been dead fifteen years before. But what is more remarkable even than that the wit of man should have conceived such an interpretation is that the same conclusion was independently arrived at by another investigator. Mr. Halpin, in his *Oberon's Vision* (Shakes. Soc. Publ.), not only follows the outline of Boaden's theory, that we have in this description an allegorical account of what happened upon the occasion of Elizabeth's visit to Kenilworth, but pursues the allegory with a minuteness of detail which Boaden did not attempt. In fact he takes up the interpretation where Boaden leaves it, and identifying the promontory on which Oberon sat with the 'brays' which are described by Lancham as 'linking a fair park with the castle on the south,' he disposes of the rest of the allegory in this wise. Cupid all armed, flying between the cold moon and the earth, is the Earl of Leicester, wavering in his passion between Queen Elizabeth and the Lady Douglas, Countess of Sheffield, to whom he was believed to be privately married. The aim which he took at a fair vestal throned by the west is the attempt made by him upon this occasion to win the hand of Elizabeth. This was defeated by 'the pride, prudery, and jealousy of power, which invariably swayed the tide of Elizabeth's passions, and the Virgin Queen finally departed from Kenilworth Castle unshackled with a matrimonial engagement, and as heartwhole as ever.' The little western flower is Lettice, Countess of Essex, with whom Leicester intrigued during the lifetime of her husband, and whom he afterwards married. We must at any rate give the inventor of this interpretation credit for remarkable ingenuity, but to accept it requires the exercise of something more than faith. If there be an allegorical meaning in Oberon's words why does he suddenly drop allegory and come back to reality when he says to Puck, 'Fetch me that flower'? No one pretends that this has an allegorical significance, and if so, how can it be separated in such a manner from what precedes, that up to this point all is allegory and from this point all is fact?

The fairy mythology of Shakespeare in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* is described by Keightley (*Fairy Mythology*, p. 325) as an attempt to blend 'the Elves of the village with the Fays of romance. His Fairies agree with the former in their diminutive stature,—diminished, indeed, to dimensions inappreciable by village gossips,—in their fondness for dancing, their love of cleanliness, and their child-abstracting propensities. Like the Fays, they form a community, ruled over by the princely Oberon and the fair Titania. There is a court and chivalry: Oberon would have the Queen's sweet changeling to be a "knight of his train to trace the forest wild." Like earthly monarchs he had his jester, "the shrewd and knavish sprite, called Robin Goodfellow." It is true that Shakespeare has presented these purely English fairies in combination with 'the heroes and heroines of the mythic age of Greece,' but indeed Theseus is Greek in name only. He is an English nobleman, who after service in the wars has returned to his estate and his field sports, and Bottom and his fellows may have been any Warwickshire peasants, hard-handed men of Coventry, but no Athenians. There is no attempt in the whole course of the play to give it a classical colouring, and there is therefore nothing incongruous to a reader in finding himself in company with the Greek-sounding names of Theseus, Egeus and Philostrate in one scene, and Oberon and Robin Goodfellow in another. The play is thoroughly English from beginning to end.

Oberon the fairy king first appears in the old French Romance of *Huon of Bourdeaux*, and is identical with Elberich the dwarf king of the German story of *Otnit in the Heldenbuch*. The name Elberich, or as it appears in the *Nibelung-entied*, Albrich, was changed in passing into French first into Auberich, then into Auberon, and finally became our Oberon. He is introduced by Spenser in the *Fairy Queen* (bk. ii. cant. 1. st. 6), where he describes Sir Guyon:—

'Well could he tournay, and in lists debate,
And knighthood tooke of good Sir Huon's hand.
When with King Oberon he came to Faery land.'

And in the tenth canto of the same book (st. 75) he is the allegorical representative of Henry VIII. The wise Elfeleos left two sons,

‘Of which faire Elferon,
The eldest brother, did untimely dy;
Whose emptie place the mightie Oberon
Doubly supplide, in spousesall and dominion.’

‘Oboram King of Fayeries’ is one of the characters in Greene’s *James the Fourth*, which was not printed till 1598, but was of course written in or before 1592.

The name Titania for the Queen of the Fairies appears to have been the invention of Shakespeare. In *Romeo and Juliet* she is known by the more familiar appellation *Queen Mab*, and in an entertainment given to Elizabeth by the Earl of Hertford at Elvetham in 1591, there was a speech addressed to the Queen by ‘Aureola, the Quene of Fairy land,’ in which Auberon is mentioned as the Fairy King. Keightley explains the origin of the name Titania, ‘It was the belief of those days that the Fairies were the same as the classic Nymphs, the attendants of Diana: “That fourth kind of spirits,” says King James, “quhilk be the gentilis was called Diana, and her wandering court, and amongst us called the *Phairie*.” The Fairy Queen was therefore the same as Diana, whom Ovid (*Met.* iii. 173) styles Titania.’ (*Fairy Mythology*, p. 325, note.) In Chaucer’s *Merchant’s Tale*, Pluto is the King of Faerie and his Queen Proserpina, who danced and sang about the well under the laurel in January’s garden.

Puck or Robin Goodfellow is the mischief-loving sprite who in one fairy genealogy is said to be the son of Oberon. His former title is an appellative and not strictly a proper name, and we find him speaking of himself, ‘As I am an honest Puck,’ ‘Else the Puck a liar call.’ In fact Puck, or pouke, is an old word for devil, and it is used in this sense in the *Vision of Piers Ploughman*, 11345 (ed. T. Wright):

‘Out of the poukes pondfold
No maynprise may us fecche.’

And in the Romance of Richard Coer de Lion, 4326 (printed in Weber's Metrical Romances, vol. ii):

'He is no man he is a pouke.'

The Icelandic *púki* is the same word, and in Friesland the kobold or domestic spirit is called Puk. In Devonshire, pixy is the name for a fairy, and in Worcestershire we are told that the peasants are sometimes *poake ledlen*, that is, misled by a mischievous spirit called *Poake*. 'Pouk-laden' is also given in Hartshorne's Shropshire Glossary. Keightley was of opinion that Shakespeare was the first to confound Puck with the house-spirit or Robin Goodfellow, but it is evident that in popular belief the same mischief-loving qualities which belong to Puck were attributed to Robin Goodfellow long before the time of Shakespeare. Tyndale, in his Obedience of a Christian Man (Parker Soc. ed. p. 321) says, 'The pope is kin to Robin Goodfellow, which sweepeth the house, washeth the dishes, and purgeth all, by night; but when day cometh, there is nothing found clean.' And again, in his Exposition of the 1st Epistle of St. John (Parker Soc. ed. p. 139), 'By reason whereof the scripture . . . is become a maze unto them, in which they wander as in a mist, or (as we say) led by Robin Goodfellow, that they cannot come to the right way, no, though they turn their caps.' The great source of information with regard to popular beliefs in fairies and spirits is Reginald Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft*, first published in 1584. Of Robin Goodfellow he says (Book iv. ch. 10), 'In deede your grandams maides were woont to set a boll of milke before him (Incubus) and his cousine Robin good-fellow, for grinding of malt or mustard, and sweeping the house at midnight: and you haue also heard that he would chafe exceedingly, if the maid or good-wife of the house, hauing compassion of his nakednes, laid anie clothes for him, be sides his messe of white bread and milke, which was his standing fee. For in that case he saith; What haue we here? Hemton hamten, here will I neuer more tread nor stampen.' Again (Bk. vii. ch. 15), 'It is a common

saieing; A lion feareth no bugs. But in our childhood our mothers maids haue so terrified vs with an ouglie diuell hauing hornes on his head, fier in his mouth, and a taile in his breech, eies like a bason, fanges like a dog, clawes like a beare, a skin like a Niger, and a voice roring like a lion, whereby we start and are afraid when we heare one crie Bough: and they haue so fraied us with bull beggers, spirits, witches, vrchens, elues, hags, fairies, satyrs, pans, faunes, sylens, kit with the cansticke, tritons, centaurs, dwarfes, giants, imps, calcars, coniuors, nymphes, changlings, *Incubus*, Robin good-fellowe, the spoorne, the mare, the man in the oke, the hell waine, the fierdrake, the puckle, Tom thombe, hob goblin, Tom tumbler, boneles, and such other bugs, that we are afraid of our owne shadowes: in so much as some neuer feare the diuell, but in a darke night; and then a polled sheepe is a perillous beast, and manie times is taken for our fathers soule, speciallie in a churchyard, where a right hardie man heretofore scant durst passe by night, but his haire would stand vpright.’ See also in the same book A Discourse vpon diuels and spirits, c. 21. Burton, in his Anatomy of Melancholy (Part I. Sec. 2. Mem. 1. Subs. 2) discusses the nature of spirits, and among other points the important question whether they are mortal. One of his divisions is as follows: ‘Terrestrial devils are those *lares, genii, faunes, satyrs*, wood-nymphs, foliots, fairies, *Robin Goodfellows, Trulli*, &c., which as they are most conversant with men, so they do them most harm . . . Some put our fairies into this rank, which have been in former time adored with much superstition, with sweeping their houses, and setting of a pail of clean water, good victuals, and the like; and then they should not be pinched, but find money in their shoes, and be fortunate in their enterprises. These are they that dance on heaths and greens, as Lavater thinks with Trithemius, and as Olaus Magnus adds, leave that green circle, which we commonly find in plain fields, which others hold to proceed from a meteor falling, or some accidental rankness of the ground; so nature sports herself . . . Paracelsus reckons up many

places in Germany, where they do usually walk in little coats, some two foot long. A bigger kind there is of them, called with us *bobgoblins*, and *Robin Goodfellows*, that would, in those superstitious times, grind corn for a mess of milk, cut wood, or do any manner of drudgery work . . . And so likewise those which Mizaldus calls *Ambulones*, that walk about midnight on great heaths and desert places, which (saith Lavater) *draw men out of the way, and lead them all night a by-way, or quite bar them of their way*. These have several names in several places; we commonly call them *pucks*.' To the same effect writes Harsnet in his Declaration of Popish Imposture (p. 134), a book quoted in the Notes to King Lear: 'And if that the bowle of curds, & creame were not duly set out for *Robin good-fellow* the Frier, & *Sisse* the dairy-maide, to meete at *binch pinch*, and laugh not, when the good wife was a bed, why then, either the pottage was burnt to next day in the pot, or the cheese would not curdle, or the butter would not come, or the ale in the fat would neuer haue good head.' The 'walking fire' in Lear, which Edgar takes for the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet is but one of the forms in which Robin appears. In the black-letter ballad of The Merry Puck, or Robin Goodfellow, which is reprinted by Mr. Halliwell (Phillipps) in his Introduction to a Midsummer Night's Dream, is the following stanza (p. 36):

'Sometimes he'd counterfeit a voyce,
And travellers call astray,
Sometimes a walking fire he'd be,
And lead them from their way.'

Another ballad, printed in Percy's Reliques (vol. iii. book 2), which relates 'The Merry Pranks of Robin Goodfellow,' may be consulted by those who wish to pursue the subject further. See also Drayton, *Nymphidia*, 282 &c., Milton, *L'Allegro*, 100-114, and an essay by Mr. Thoms on the Folklore of Shakespeare.

It has been suggested that the device employed by Oberon to enchant Titania, by anointing her eyelids with the juice

of a flower, may have been borrowed by Shakespeare from the Spanish Romance of Diana by George of Montemayor. But apart from the difficulty which arises from the fact that no English translation of this romance is known before that published by Yong in 1598, there is no necessity to suppose that Shakespeare was indebted to any one for what must have been a familiar element in all incantations at a time when a belief in witchcraft was common. Percy (*Reliques*, vol. iii. book 2, end) quotes a receipt by the celebrated astrologer Dr. Dee for 'An unguent to annoynt under the Eyelids, and upon the Eyelids eveninge and morninge: but especially when you call,' that is, upon the fairies. It consisted of a decoction of various flowers.

Dr. Farmer observed to Malone that in the lines spoken by Pyramus 'Approach, ye furies fell,' &c., and in those of Thisbe's speech,

'O sisters three,
Come, come to me,
With hands as pale as milk,'

Shakespeare intended to ridicule a passage in *Damon and Pythias*, by Richard Edwards, 1582:

'Ye furies, all at once
On me your torments trie . . .
Gripe me, you greedy griefs,
And present pangues of death,
You sisters three, with cruel handes
With speed come stop my breath!'

Certainly both in this play and in the tragical comedy of *Appius and Virginia*, printed in 1575, may be found doggrel no better than that which he puts into the mouth of Bottom. See for example the speech of Judge Appius to Claudius, beginning,

'The furies fell of Limbo lake
My princely days do short, &c.'

It is also worth while to notice that the song quoted in *Romeo and Juliet*, iv. 5. 128,

'When griping grief the heart doth wound &c.,'

is by the author of *Damon and Pythias*.

In Mr. Collier's *Annals of the Stage* (ii. 30-36) is related a curious story of a charge made against the Bishop of Lincoln by one John Spencer for having had a play performed in his house in London on Sunday, September 27, 1631. From what follows it appears that the play in question was *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, but there is evidently something wrong about the story, for the 27th of September in the year 1631 was on a Tuesday. Taking it however for what it is worth, the document from which Mr. Collier quotes, which purports to be an order of the Archbishop's Court, decrees, 'that Mr. Wilson, because he was a speciall plotter and contriver of this business, and did in such a brutishe manner acte the same with an Asses head, and therefore hee shall, uppon Tuisday next, from 6 of the clocke in the morning till six of the clocke at night, sitt in the Porters Lodge at my Lords Bishoppes House, with his feete in the stocks, and attyred with his asse head, and a bottle of hay sett before him, and this subscription on his breast :

'Good people I have played the beast,
And brought ill things to passe :
I was a man, but thus have made
My selfe a silly Asse.'

After the Restoration we find in 1661 a play called *The Merry conceited Humors of Bottom the Weaver*, in which Theseus and his court are left out altogether, and nothing remains but the fairies and the clowns. It had perhaps been played privately after the suppression of the theatres. On the 29th of September 1662, Mr. Pepys having endured a period of abstinence from drink and play-going, in accordance with a vow which came to an end on that day, rewarded his constancy by going to the King's Theatre, where, he says, 'we saw "*Midsummer's Night's Dream*," which I had never seen before, nor shall ever again, for it is the most insipid ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life.' Mr. Pepys was perhaps a little difficult to please, and his critical judgement was not final. *The Tempest* is the most innocent play he

ever saw, and has no great wit. He calls *The Taming of the Shrew* a 'silly play,' while *Othello*, which he had once thought 'mighty good,' seemed to him but a mean thing after reading '*The Adventures of Five Hours*.' No doubt he reflected the taste of his time, and it is not much to be wondered at that he did not care for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. There is in truth no plot in the play at all and very little dramatic movement. Indeed it is rather a masque than a play, or at any rate a play of situation rather than of plot or character. And as with a masque was combined the antimasque as a kind of comic counterpart or farce, so in the present play the fairies and the clowns supply the place of the antimasque of which they form the sub-divisions or semi-choruses.

The title of the play has often been the subject of dispute. Aubrey has a story, which is as worthless as most of his worthless gossip is, to the effect that '*The humour of the constable in A Midsommer-Night-Dreame he happened to take at Crendon [or Grendon] in Bucks (I think it was Midsomer-night that he happened to be there); which is the road from London to Stratford; and there was living that constable about 1642, when I first came to Oxon.*' (Shakespeare, ed. 1821, ii. 491.) In the play itself the time is about May day, but Shakespeare from haste or inadvertence has fallen into some confusion in regard to it. Theseus' opening words point to April 27, four days before the new moon which was to behold the night of his marriage with Hippolyta. He orders *Hermia*

'By the next new moon,
The sealing day between my love and me,'

to make up her mind either to wed *Demetrius* or be condemned to death or perpetual virginity. The next night, which would be April 28, *Lysander* appoints for *Hermia* to escape with him from Athens. 'Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night.' The night of the second day is occupied with the adventures in the wood, and in the morning the

lovers are discovered by Theseus and his huntsmen, and it is supposed that they have risen early to observe the rite of May. So that the morning of the third day is the 1st of May, and the last two days of April are lost altogether. Titania's reference to the 'middle-summer's spring' must therefore be to the summer of the preceding year. It is a curious fact, on which however I would not lay too much stress, that in 1592 there was a new moon on the 1st of May; so that if *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was written so as to be acted on a May day when the actual age of the moon corresponded with its age in the play, it must have been written for May day 1592.

Midsummer Eve appears to have been regarded as a period when the imagination ran riot, and many of the old superstitions which characterised it are recorded in Brand's *Popular Antiquities*. For instance, 'Grose tells us that any person fasting on Midsummer Eve, and sitting in the church porch, will at midnight see the spirits of the persons of that parish who will die that year, come and knock at the church door, in the order and succession in which they will die (i. p. 331). 'Maidens practised divination on this night to find out their future husbands, and Levinus Lemnius . . . tells us that the Low Dutch have a proverb, that when men have passed a troublesome night's rest, and could not sleep at all, they say, we have passed St. John Baptist's Night; that is, we have not taken any sleep, but watched all night; and not only so, but we have been in great troubles, noyses, clamours, and stirs, that have held us waking' (i. p. 305). We know that Malvolio's strange conduct is described by Olivia (*Twelfth Night*, iii. 4. 61) as very Midsummer madness, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* therefore is no inappropriate title for the series of wild incongruities of which the play consists.

W. A. W.

CAMBRIDGE,

20 October, 1877.



A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THESEUS, Duke of Athens.
 EGEUS, father to Hermia.
 LYSANDER, } in love with Hermia.
 DEMETRIUS, }
 PHILOSTRATE, master of the revels to Theseus.
 QUINCE, a carpenter.
 SNUG, a joiner.
 BOTTOM, a weaver.
 FLUTE, a bellows-mender.
 SNOUT, a tinker.
 STARVELING, a tailor.

HIPPOLYTA, queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus.

HERMIA, daughter to Egeus, in love with Lysander.
 HELENA, in love with Demetrius.

OBERON, king of the fairies.
 TITANIA, queen of the fairies.
 PUCK, or Robin Goodfellow.
 PEASEBLOSSOM, }
 COBWEB, } fairies.
 MOTH, }
 MUSTARDEED, }

Other fairies attending their King and Queen.
 Attendants on Theseus and Hippolyta.

SCENE: *Athens, and a wood near it.*

ACT I.

SCENE I. *Athens. The palace of THESEUS.*

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, and Attendants.

The. Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
 Draws on apace; four happy days bring in
 Another moon: but, O, methinks, how slow
 This old moon wanes! she lingers my desires,
 Like to a step-dame or a dowager
 Long withering out a young man's revenue.

Hip. Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;
 Four nights will quickly dream away the time;
 And then the moon, like to a silver bow
 New-bent in heaven, shall behold the night
 Of our solemnities. 10

The. Go, Philostrate,
 Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments;

Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth :
 Turn melancholy forth to funerals ;
 The pale companion is not for our pomp. [*Exit Philostrate.*
 Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword,
 And won thy love, doing thee injuries ;
 But I will wed thee in another key,
 With pomp, with triumph and with revelling.

Enter EGEUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER, and DEMETRIUS.

Ege. Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke! 20

The. Thanks, good Egeus : what's the news with thee?

Ege. Full of vexation come I, with complaint
 Against my child, my daughter Hermia.
 Stand forth, Demetrius. My noble lord,
 This man hath my consent to marry her.
 Stand forth, Lysander : and, my gracious duke,
 This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child :
 Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes
 And interchanged love-tokens with my child :
 Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung 30
 With feigning voice verses of feigning love,
 And stolen the impression of her fantasy
 With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds, conceits,
 Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats, messengers
 Of strong prevailment in unharden'd youth :
 With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart,
 Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me,
 To stubborn harshness : and, my gracious duke,
 Be it so she will not here before your grace
 Consent to marry with Demetrius, 40
 I beg the ancient privilege of Athens,
 As she is mine, I may dispose of her :
 Which sha'l be either to this gentleman
 Or to her death, according to our law
 Immediately provided in that case.

The. What say you, Hermia? be advised, fair maid :
 To you your father should be as a god ;
 One that composed your beauties, yea, and one

To whom you are but as a form in wax
 By him imprinted and within his power 50
 To leave the figure or disfigure it.
 Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

Her. So is Lysander.

The. In himself he is;
 But in this kind, wanting your father's voice,
 The other must be held the worthier.

Her. I would my father look'd but with my eyes.

The. Rather your eyes must with his judgement look.

Her. I do entreat your grace to pardon me. ·
 I know not by what power I am made bold,
 Nor how it may concern my modesty, 60
 In such a presence here to plead my thoughts;
 But I beseech your grace that I may know
 The worst that may befall me in this case,
 If I refuse to wed Demetrius.

The. Either to die the death or to abjure
 For ever the society of men.
 Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires;
 Know of your youth, examine well your blood,
 Whether, if you yield not to your father's choice,
 You can endure the livery of a nun, 70
 For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd,
 To live a barren sister all your life,
 Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.
 Thrice-blessed they that master so their blood,
 To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;
 But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd,
 Than that which withering on the virgin thorn
 Grows, lives and dies in single blessedness.

Her. So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,
 Ere I will yield my virgin patent up 80
 Unto his lordship, whose unwished yoke
 My soul consents not to give sovereignty.

The. Take time to pause; and, by the next new moon—
 The sealing-day betwixt my love and me,

For everlasting bond of fellowship—
 Upon that day either prepare to die
 For disobedience to your father's will,
 Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would ;
 Or on Diana's altar to protest
 For aye austerity and single life. 90

Dem. Relent, sweet Hermia: and, Lysander, yield
 Thy crazed title to my certain right.

Lys. You have her father's love, Demetrius;
 Let me have Hermia's: do you marry him.

Ege. Scornful Lysander! true, he hath my love,
 And what is mine my love shall render him.
 And she is mine, and all my right of her
 I do estate unto Demetrius.

Lys. I am, my lord, as well derived as he,
 As well possess'd; my love is more than his; 100
 My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd,
 If not with vantage, as Demetrius';
 And, which is more than all these boasts can be,
 I am beloved of beauteous Hermia:
 Why should not I then prosecute my right?
 Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,
 Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,
 And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,
 Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,
 Upon this spotted and inconstant man. 110

The. I must confess that I have heard so much,
 And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof;
 But, being over-full of self-affairs,
 My mind did lose it. But, Demetrius, come;
 And come, Egeus; you shall go with me,
 I have some private schooling for you both.
 For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself
 To fit your fancies to your father's will;
 Or else the law of Athens yields you up—
 Which by no means we may extenuate— 120
 To death, or to a vow of single life.

Come, my Hippolyta: what cheer, my love?
 Demetrius and Egeus, go along:
 I must employ you in some business
 Against our nuptial and confer with you
 Of something nearly that concerns yourselves.

Ege. With duty and desire we follow you.

[*Exeunt all but Lysander and Hermia.*]

Lys. How now, my love! why is your cheek so pale?
 How chance the roses there do fade so fast?

Her. Belike for want of rain, which I could well 130
 Beteem them from the tempest of my eyes.

Lys. Ay me! for aught that I could ever read,
 Could ever hear by tale or history,
 The course of true love never did run smooth;
 But, either it was different in blood,—

Her. O cross! too high to be enthrall'd to low.

Lys. Or else misgraffed in respect of years,—

Her. O spite! too old to be engaged to young.

Lys. Or else it stood upon the choice of friends,—

Her. O hell! to choose love by another's eyes. 140

Lys. Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
 War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,
 Making it momentany as a sound,
 Swift as a shadow, short as any dream;
 Brief as the lightning in the collied night,
 That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,
 And ere a man hath power to say 'Behold!'
 The jaws of darkness do devour it up:
 So quick bright things come to confusion.

Her. If then true lovers have been ever cross'd, 150
 It stands as an edict in destiny:
 Then let us teach our trial patience,
 Because it is a customary cross,
 As due to love as thoughts and dreams and sighs,
 Wishes and tears, poor fancy's followers.

Lys. A good persuasion: therefore, hear me, Hermia.

I have a widow aunt, a dowager
 Of great revenue, and she hath no child:
 From Athens is her house remote seven leagues;
 And she respects me as her only son. 160
 There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee;
 And to that place the sharp Athenian law
 Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me then,
 Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night;
 And in the wood, a league without the town,
 Where I did meet thee once with Helena,
 To do observance to a morn of May,
 There will I stay for thee.

Her. My good Lysander!
 I swear to thee, by Cupid's strongest bow,
 By his best arrow with the golden head, 170
 By the simplicity of Venus' doves,
 By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves,
 And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen,
 When the false Trojan under sail was seen,
 By all the vows that ever men have broke,
 In number more than ever women spoke,
 In that same place thou hast appointed me,
 To-morrow truly will I meet with thee.

Lys. Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

Enter HELENA.

Her. God speed fair Helena! whither away? 180

Hel. Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.
 Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!
 Your eyes are lode-stars; and your tongue's sweet air
 More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,
 When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.
 Sickness is catching: O, were favour so,
 Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go;
 My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,
 My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.
 Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated, 190
 The rest I'd give to be to you translated.

O, teach me how you look, and with what art
You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart.

Her. I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

Hel. O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!

Her. I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

Hel. O that my prayers could such affection move!

Her. The more I hate, the more he follows me.

Hel. The more I love, the more he hateth me.

Her. His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine. 200

Hel. None, but your beauty: would that fault were mine!

Her. Take comfort: he no more shall see my face;
Lysander and myself will fly this place.

Before the time I did Lysander see,

Seem'd Athens as a paradise to me:

O, then, what graces in my love do dwell,

That he hath turn'd a heaven unto a hell!

Lys. Helen, to you our minds we will unfold:

To-morrow night, when Phœbe doth behold

Her silver visage in the watery glass, 210

Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass,

A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal,

Through Athens' gates have we devised to steal.

Her. And in the wood, where often you and I

Upon faint primrose-beds were wont to lie,

Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,

There my Lysander and myself shall meet;

And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,

To seek new friends and stranger companies.

Farewell, sweet playfellow: pray thou for us; 220

And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius!

Keep word, Lysander: we must starve our sight

From lovers' food till morrow deep midnight.

Lys. I will, my Hermia. [*Exit Herm.*] Helena, adieu:
As you on him, Demetrius dote on you! [*Exit.*]

Hel. How happy some o'er other some can be!
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.

But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;
 He will not know what all but he do know:
 And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes, 230
 So I, admiring of his qualities:
 Things base and vile, holding no quantity,
 Love can transpose to form and dignity:
 Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;
 And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind:
 Nor hath Love's mind of any judgement taste;
 Wings and no eyes figure unheedy haste:
 And therefore is Love said to be a child,
 Because in choice he is so oft beguiled.
 As waggish boys in game themselves forswear, 240
 So the boy Love is perjured every where:
 For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,
 He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine;
 And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,
 So he dissolved, and showers of oaths did melt.
 I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight:
 Then to the wood will he to-morrow night
 Pursue her; and for this intelligence
 If I have thanks, it is a dear expense:
 But herein mean I to enrich my pain, 250
 To have his sight thither and back again. [Exit.

SCENE II. *Athens.* QUINCE'S house.

Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, and
STARVELING.

Quin. Is all our company here?

Bot. You were best to call them generally, man by man,
according to the scrip.

Quin. Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is
thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude
before the duke and the duchess, on his wedding-day at
night.

Bot. First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on; then read the names of the actors, and so grow to a point. 10

Quin. Marry, our play is, The most lamentable comedy, and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.

Bot. A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters, spread yourselves.

Quin. Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

Bot. Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

Quin. You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

Bot. What is Pyramus? a lover, or a tyrant?

Quin. A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love. 20

Bot. That will ask some tears in the true performing of it: if I do it, let the audience look to their eyes; I will move storms, I will condole in some measure. To the rest: yet my chief humour is for a tyrant: I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

The raging rocks

And shivering shocks

Shall break the locks

Of prison gates;

And Phibbus' car

30

Shall shine from far

And make and mar

The foolish Fates.

This was lofty! Now name the rest of the players. This is Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein; a lover is more condoling.

Quin. Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

Flu. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

Flu. What is Thisby? a wandering knight?

Quin. It is the lady that Pyramus must love. 40

Flu. Nay, faith, let not me play a woman; I have a beard coming.

Quin. That's all one: you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

Bot. An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too, I'll speak in a monstrous little voice, 'Thisne, Thisne;' 'Ah Pyramus, my lover dear! thy Thisby dear, and lady dear!'

Quin. No, no; you must play Pyramus: and, Flute, you Thisby. 50

Bot. Well, proceed.

Quin. Robin Starveling, the tailor.

Star. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother. Tom Snout, the tinker.

Snout. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. You, Pyramus' father: myself, Thisby's father. Snug, the joiner; you, the lion's part: and, I hope, here is a play fitted.

Snug. Have you the lion's part written? pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study. 61

Quin. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

Bot. Let me play the lion too: I will roar, that I will do any man's heart good to hear me; I will roar, that I will make the duke say 'Let him roar again, let him roar again.'

Quin. An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all. 70

All. That would hang us, every mother's son.

Bot. I grant you, friends, if that you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us: but I will aggravate my voice so, that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale.

Quin. You can play no part but Pyramus; for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man; a proper man, as one shall see in a

summer's day; a most lovely gentleman-like man: therefore you must needs play Pyramus. 80

Bot. Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?

Quin. Why, what you will.

Bot. I will discharge it in either your straw-colour beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French-crown-colour beard, your perfect yellow.

Quin. Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play barefaced. But, masters, here are your parts: and I am to entreat you, request you and desire you, to con them by to-morrow night; and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight; there will we rehearse, for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogged with company, and our devices known. In the meantime I will draw a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not. 95

Bot. We will meet; and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously. Take pains; be perfect: adieu.

Quin. At the duke's oak we meet.

Bot. Enough; hold or cut bow-strings. [Exeunt.]

ACT II.

SCENE I. *A wood near Athens.*

Enter, from opposite sides, a FAIRY, and PUCK.

Puck. How now, spirit! whither wander you?

Fai. Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire,
I do wander every where,
Swifter than the moon's sphere;

And I serve the fairy queen,
 To dew her orbs upon the green.
 The cowslips tall her pensioners be: 10
 In their gold coats spots you see;
 Those be rubies, fairy favours,
 In those freckles live their savours:
 I must go seek some dewdrops here
 And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.

Farewell, thou lob of spirits; I'll be gone:
 Our queen and all her elves come here anon.

Puck. The king doth keep his revels here to-night:
 Take heed the queen come not within his sight;
 For Oberon is passing fell and wrath, 20
 Because that she as her attendant hath
 A lovely boy, stolen from an Indian king;
 She never had so sweet a changeling;
 And jealous Oberon would have the child
 Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild;
 But she perforce withholds the loved boy,
 Crowns him with flowers and makes him all her joy:
 And now they never meet in grove or green,
 By fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen,
 But they do square, that all their elves for fear 30
 Creep into acorn-cups and hide them there.

Fai. Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
 Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
 Call'd Robin Goodfellow: are not you he
 That frights the maidens of the villagery;
 Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern
 And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;
 And sometime make the drink to bear no barm;
 Misdread night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?
 Those that Hobgoblin call you and sweet Puck, 40
 You do their work, and they shall have good luck:
 Are not you he?

Puck. Thou speak'st aright;
 I am that merry wanderer of the night.

I jest to Oberon and make him smile
 When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,
 Neighing in likeness of a filly foal :
 And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,
 In very likeness of a roasted crab,
 And when she drinks, against her lips I bob
 And on her wither'd dewlap pour the ale. 50
 The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,
 Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me ;
 Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,
 And 'tailor' cries, and falls into a cough ;
 And then the whole quire hold their hips and laugh,
 And waxen in their mirth and neeze and swear
 A merrier hour was never wasted there.
 But, room, fairy! here comes Oberon.

Fai. And here my mistress. Would that he were gone!

*Enter, from one side, OBERON, with his train; from the other,
 TITANIA, with hers.*

Obe. Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania. 60

Tita. What, jealous Oberon! Fairies, skip hence :
 I have forsworn his bed and company.

Obe. Tarry, rash wanton: am not I thy lord?

Tita. Then I must be thy lady: but I know
 When thou hast stolen away from fairy land,
 And in the shape of Corin sat all day,
 Playing on pipes of corn and versing love
 To amorous Phillida. Why art thou here,
 Come from the farthest steppe of India?
 But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon, 70
 Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior love,
 To Theseus must be wedded, and you come
 To give their bed joy and prosperity.

Obe. How canst thou thus for shame, Titania,
 Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,
 Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?
 Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night

From Perigenia, whom he ravished?
 And make him with fair Ægle break his faith,
 With Ariadne and Antiopa?

80

Tita. These are the forgeries of jealousy:
 And never, since the middle summer's spring,
 Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,
 By paved fountain or by rushy brook,
 Or in the beached margent of the sea,
 To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
 But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.

Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
 As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea
 Contagious fogs; which falling in the land
 Have every pelting river made so proud
 That they have overborne their continents:

90

The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,
 The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn
 Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard;
 The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
 And crows are fatted with the murrion flock;
 The nine men's morris is fill'd up with mud,
 And the quaint mazes in the wanton green
 For lack of tread are undistinguishable:

100

The human mortals want their winter here;
 No night is now with hymn or carol blest:
 Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
 Pale in her anger, washes all the air,
 That rheumatic diseases do abound:

And thorough this distemperature we see
 The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts
 Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,
 And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown

An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
 Is, as in mockery, set: the spring, the summer,
 The childing autumn, angry winter, change
 Their wonted liveries, and the mazed world,

110

By their increase, now knows not which is which:
 And this same progeny of evils comes

From our debate, from our dissension ;
We are their parents and original.

Obe. Do you amend it then ; it lies in you :
Why should Titania cross her Oberon ?
I do but beg a little changeling boy,
To be my henchman. 120

Tita. Set your heart at rest :
The fairy land buys not the child of me.
His mother was a votaress of my order :
And, in the spiced Indian air, by night,
Full often hath she gossip'd by my side,
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
Marking the embarked traders on the flood,
When we have laughed to see the sails conceive
And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind ;
Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait 130
Following,—her womb then rich with my young squire,—
Would imitate, and sail upon the land,
To fetch me trifles, and return again,
As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.
But she, being mortal, of that boy did die ;
And for her sake do I rear up her boy,
And for her sake I will not part with him.

Obe. How long within this wood intend you stay ?

Tita. Perchance till after Theseus' wedding-day.
If you will patiently dance in our round 140
And see our moonlight revels, go with us ;
If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

Obe. Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.

Tita. Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away !
We shall chide downright, if I longer stay.

[*Exit Titania with her train.*]

Obe. Well, go thy way : thou shalt not from this grove
Till I torment thee for this injury.
My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou rememberest
Since once I sat upon a promontory,

And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
That the rude sea grew civil at her song
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
To hear the sea-maid's music, 150

Puck.

I remember.

Obe. That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took
At a fair vestal throned by the west,
And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts; 160
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
And the imperial votaress passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.
Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:
It fell upon a little western flower,
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,
And maidens call it love-in-idleness.
Fetch me that flower; the herb I shew'd thee once:
The juice of it on sleeping eye-lids laid 170
Will make or man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.
Fetch me this herb; and be thou here again
Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

Puck. I'll put a girdle round about the earth
In forty minutes. 180

[*Exit*

Obe. Having once this juice,
I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.
The next thing then she waking looks upon,
Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull, 180
On meddling monkey, or on busy ape,
She shall pursue it with the soul of love:
And ere I take this charm from off her sight,
As I can take it with another herb,

I'll make her render up her page to me.
 But who comes here? I am invisible;
 And I will overhear their conference.

Enter DEMETRIUS, HELENA following him.

Dem. I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.
 Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?
 The one I'll slay, the other slayeth me. 190
 Thou told'st me they were stolen unto this wood;
 And here am I, and wood within this wood,
 Because I cannot meet my Hermia.
 Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

Hel. You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant:
 But yet you draw not iron, for my heart
 Is true as steel: leave you your power to draw,
 And I shall have no power to follow you.

Dem. Do I entice you? do I speak you fair?
 Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth 200
 Tell you, I do not, nor I cannot love you?

Hel. And even for that do I love you the more.
 I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,
 The more you beat me, I will fawn on you:
 Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,
 Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,
 Unworthy as I am, to follow you.
 What worser place can I beg in your love,—
 And yet a place of high respect with me,—
 Than to be used as you use your dog? 210

Dem. Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit,
 For I am sick when I do look on thee.

Hel. And I am sick when I look not on you.

Dem. You do impeach your modesty too much,
 To leave the city and commit yourself
 Into the hands of one that loves you not;
 To trust the opportunity of night
 And the ill counsel of a desert place
 With the rich worth of your virginity.

Hel. Your virtue is my privilege: for that 220
 It is not night when I do see your face,
 Therefore I think I am not in the night;
 Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company,
 For you in my respect are all the world:
 Then how can it be said I am alone,
 When all the world is here to look on me?

Dem. I'll run from thee and hide me in the brakes,
 And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.

Hel. The wildest hath not such a heart as you.
 Run when you will, the story shall be changed: 230
 Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase;
 The dove pursues the griffin; the mild hind
 Makes speed to catch the tiger; bootless speed,
 When cowardice pursues and valour flies.

Dem. I will not stay thy questions; let me go:
 Or, if thou follow me, do not believe
 But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.

Hel. Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,
 You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius!
 Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex: 240
 We cannot fight for love, as men may do;
 We should be woo'd and were not made to woo.

[*Exit Demetrius.*

I'll follow thee and make a heaven of hell,
 To die upon the hand I love so well. [Exit.

Obe. Fare thee well, nymph: ere he do leave this grove,
 Thou shalt fly him and he shall seek thy love.

Re-enter PUCK.

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

Puck. Ay, there it is.

Obe. I pray thee, give it me.
 I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
 Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows, 250
 Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
 With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine:

There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
 Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight;
 And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,
 Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in:
 And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,
 And make her full of hateful fantasies.
 Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove:
 A sweet Athenian lady is in love
 With a disdainful youth: anoint his eyes;
 But do it when the next thing he espies
 May be the lady: thou shalt know the man
 By the Athenian garments he hath on.
 Effect it with some care that he may prove
 More fond on her than she upon her love:
 And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

Puck. Fear not, my lord, your servant shall do so.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *Another part of the wood.*

Enter TITANIA, with her train.

Tita. Come, now a roundel and a fairy song;
 Then, for the third part of a minute, hence;
 Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds,
 Some war with rere-mice for their leathern wings,
 To make my small elves coats, and some keep back
 The clamorous owl that nightly hoots and wonders
 At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep;
 Then to your offices and let me rest.

The Fairies sing.

You spotted snakes with double tongue,
 Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
 Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong,
 Come not near our fairy queen.
 Philomel, with melody
 Sing in our sweet lullaby;
 Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby:

Never harm,
 Nor spell nor charm,
 Come our lovely lady nigh;
 So, good night, with lullaby.
 Weaving spiders, come not here;
 Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence!
 Beetles black, approach not near;
 Worm nor snail, do no offence.
 Philomel, with melody, &c.

20

A Fairy. Hence, away! now all is well:
 One aloof stand sentinel.

[*Exeunt Fairies. Titania sleeps.*]

Enter OBERON, and squeezes the flower on Titania's eyelids.

Obe. What thou seest when thou dost wake,
 Do it for thy true-love take,
 Love and languish for his sake:
 Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,
 Pard, or boar with bristled hair,
 In thy eye that shall appear
 When thou wakest, it is thy dear:
 Wake when some vile thing is near.

30

[*Exit.*]

Enter LYSANDER and HERMIA.

Lys. Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood;
 And to speak troth, I have forgot our way:
 We'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,
 And tarry for the comfort of the day.

Her. Be it so, Lysander: find you out a bed;
 For I upon this bank will rest my head.

40

Lys. One turf shall serve as pillow for us both;
 One heart, one bed, two bosoms and one troth.

Her. Nay, good Lysander; for my sake, my dear,
 Lie further off yet, do not lie so near.

Lys. O, take the sense, sweet, of my innocence!
 Love takes the meaning in love's conference.
 I mean, that my heart unto yours is knit
 So that but one heart we can make of it;

Two bosoms interchained with an oath;
 So then two bosoms and a single troth. 50
 Then by your side no bed-room me deny;
 For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.

Her. Lysander riddles very prettily:
 Now much beshrew my manners and my pride,
 If Hermia meant to say Lysander lied.
 But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy
 Lie further off; in human modesty,
 Such separation as may well be said
 Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid,
 So far be distant; and, good night, sweet friend: 60
 Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end!

Lys. Amen, amen, to that fair prayer, say I;
 And then end life when I end loyalty!
 Here is my bed: sleep give thee—all his rest!

Her. With half that wish the wisher's eyes be press'd!
 [*They sleep.*]

Enter PUCK.

Puck. Through the forest have I gone,
 But Athenian found I none,
 On whose eyes I might approve
 This flower's force in stirring love.
 Night and silence.—Who is here? 70
 Weeds of Athens he doth wear:
 This is he, my master said,
 Despised the Athenian maid;
 And here the maiden, sleeping sound,
 On the dank and dirty ground.
 Pretty soul! she durst not lie
 Near this lack-love, this kill-courtesy.
 Churl, upon thy eyes I throw
 All the power this charm doth owe. 80
 When thou wakest, let love forbid
 Sleep his seat on thy eyelid:
 So awake when I am gone;
 For I must now to Oberon. [*Exit.*]

Enter DEMETRIUS and HELENA, running.

Hel. Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

Dem. I charge thee, hence, and do not haunt me thus.

Hel. O, wilt thou darkling leave me? do not so.

Dem. Stay, on thy peril: I alone will go. [Exit.

Hel. O, I am out of breath in this fond chase!

The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.

Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies; 90

For she hath blessed and attractive eyes.

How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears:

If so, my eyes are oftener wash'd than hers.

No, no, I am as ugly as a bear;

For beasts that meet me run away for fear:

Therefore no marvel though Demetrius

Do, as a monster, fly my presence thus.

What wicked and dissembling glass of mine

Made me compare with Hermia's spherish eye?

But who is here? Lysander! on the ground! 100

Dead? or asleep? I see no blood, no wound.

Lysander, if you live, good sir, awake.

Lys. [*Awaking.*] And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake.

Transparent Helena! Nature shows art,

That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.

Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a word

Is that vile name to perish on my sword!

Hel. Do not say so, Lysander; say not so.

What though he love your Hermia? Lord, what though?

Yet Hermia still loves you: then be content. 110

Lys. Content with Hermia! No; I do repent

The tedious minutes I with her have spent.

Not Hermia but Helena I love:

Who will not change a raven for a dove?

The will of man is by his reason sway'd;

And reason says you are the worthier maid.

Things growing are not ripe until their season:
 So I, being young, till now ripe not to reason;
 And touching now the point of human skill,
 Reason becomes the marshal to my will 120
 And leads me to your eyes, where I o'erlook
 Love's stories written in love's richest book.

Hel. Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born?
 When at your hands did I deserve this scorn?
 Is't not enough, is't not enough, young man,
 That I did never, no, nor never can,
 Deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye,
 But you must flout my insufficiency?
 Good troth, you do me wrong, good sooth, you do,
 In such disdainful manner me to woo. 130
 But fare you well: perforce I must confess
 I thought you lord of more true gentleness.
 O, that a lady, of one man refused,
 Should of another therefore be abused! [*Exit.*]

Lys. She sees not Hermia. Hermia, sleep thou there:
 And never mayst thou come Lysander near!
 For as a surfeit of the sweetest things
 The deepest loathing to the stomach brings,
 Or as the heresies that men do leave
 Are hated most of those they did deceive, 140
 So thou, my surfeit and my heresy,
 Of all be hated, but the most of me!
 And, all my powers, address your love and might
 To honour Helen and to be her knight! [*Exit.*]

Her. [*Awaking.*] Help me, Lysander, help me! do thy
 best
 To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast!
 Ay me, for pity! what a dream was here!
 Lysander, look how I do quake with fear:
 Methought a serpent eat my heart away,
 And you sat smiling at his cruel prey. 150
 Lysander! what, removed? Lysander! lord!
 What, out of hearing? gone? no sound, no word?

Alack, where are you? speak, an if you hear;
 Speak, of all loves! I swoon almost with fear.
 No? then I well perceive you are not nigh:
 Either death or you I'll find immediately.

[*Exit.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I. *The wood. Titania lying asleep.*

Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, and
 STARVELING.

Bot. Are we all met?

Quin. Pat, pat; and here's a marvellous convenient place
 for our rehearsal. This green plot shall be our stage, this
 hawthorn-brake our tiring-house; and we will do it in action
 as we will do it before the duke.

Bot. Peter Quince,—

Quin. What sayest thou, bully Bottom?

Bot. There are things in this comedy of Pyramus
 and Thisby that will never please. First, Pyramus must
 draw a sword to kill himself; which the ladies cannot abide.
 How answer you that? 11

Snout. By'r lakin, a parlous fear.

Star. I believe we must leave the killing out, when all
 is done.

Bot. Not a whit: I have a device to make all well. Write
 me a prologue; and let the prologue seem to say, we will do
 no harm with our swords and that Pyramus is not killed
 indeed; and, for the more better assurance, tell them that
 I Pyramus am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver: this
 will put them out of fear. 20

Quin. Well, we will have such a prologue; and it shall
 be written in eight and six.

Bot. No, make it two more; let it be written in eight and eight.

Snout. Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

Star. I fear it, I promise you.

Bot. Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves: to bring in—God shield us!—a lion among ladies, is a most dreadful thing; for there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living; and we ought to look to 't. 30

Snout. Therefore another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

Bot. Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck: and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect,—'Ladies,'—or 'Fair ladies,—I would wish you,'—or 'I would request you,'—or 'I would entreat you,—not to fear, not to tremble: my life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life: no, I am no such thing; I am a man as other men are;' and there indeed let him name his name, and tell them plainly he is Snug the joiner. 41

Quin. Well, it shall be so. But there is two hard things; that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber; for, you know, Pyramus and Thisby meet by moonlight.

Snout. Doth the moon shine that night we play our play?

Bot. A calendar, a calendar! look in the almanac; find out moonshine, find out moonshine.

Quin. Yes, it doth shine that night.

Bot. Why, then may you leave a casement of the great chamber window, where we play, open, and the moon may shine in at the casement. 51

Quin. Ay; or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lanthorn, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of Moonshine. Then, there is another thing: we must have a wall in the great chamber; for Pyramus and Thisby, says the story, did talk though the chink of a wall.

Snout. You can never bring in a wall. What say you, Bottom? 59

Bot. Some man or other must present Wall: and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-cast about him, to signify wall; and let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper.

Quin. If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus, you begin: when you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake: and so every one according to his cue.

Enter PUCK behind.

Puck. What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here,

So near the cradle of the fairy queen?

What, a play toward! I'll be an auditor;

70

And actor too perhaps, if I see cause.

Quin. Speak, Pyramus. Thisby stand forth.

Bot. Thisby, the flowers of odious savours sweet,—

Quin. Odours, odours.

Bot. odours savours sweet:

So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisby dear.

But hark, a voice! stay thou but here awhile,

And by and by I will to thee appear.

[Exit.

Puck. A stranger Pyramus than e'er played here. [Exit.

Flu. Must I speak now?

Quin. Ay, marry, must you; for you must understand he goes but to see a noise that he heard, and is to come again.

Flu. Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue, 82

Of colour like the red rose on triumphant brier,

Most brisky juvenal and eke most lovely Jew,

As true as truest horse that yet would never tire,

I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.

Quin. 'Ninus' tomb,' man: why, you must not speak that yet; that you answer to Pyramus: you speak all your part at once, cues and all. Pyramus enter: your cue is past; it is, 'never tire.'

90

Flu. O,—As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire.

Re-enter PUCK, and BOTTOM *with an ass's head.*

Bot. If I were fair, Thisby, I were only thine.

Quin. O monstrous! O strange! we are haunted. Pray, masters! fly, masters! Help!

[Exeunt Quince, Snug, Flute, Snout, and Starveling.]

Puck. I'll follow you, I'll lead you about a round,
Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier:
Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,

A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire;
And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn, 100
Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn. *[Exit.]*

Bot. Why do they run away? this is a knavery of them to make me afraid.

Re-enter SNOUT.

Snout. O Bottom, thou art changed! what do I see on thee?

Bot. What do you see? you see an ass-head of your own, do you? *[Exit Snout.]*

Re-enter QUINCE.

Quin. Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated. *[Exit.]*

Bot. I see their knavery: this is to make an ass of me; to fright me, if they could. But I will not stir from this place, do what they can: I will walk up and down here, and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid. *[Sings.]*

The ouzel cock so black of hue, 114

With orange-tawny bill,

The throstle with his note so true,

The wren with little quill,—

Tita. *[Awaking.]* What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

Bot. *[Sings]*

The finch, the sparrow and the lark,

The plain-song cuckoo gray, 120

Whose note full many a man doth mark,

And dares not answer nay;—

for, indeed, who would set his wit to so foolish a bird? who would give a bird the lie, though he cry 'cuckoo' never so?

Tita. I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:
 Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note;
 So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;
 And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me
 On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee. 129

Bot. Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that: and yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together now-a-days; the more the pity that some honest neighbours will not make them friends. Nay, I can gleek upon occasion.

Tita. Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

Bot. Not so, neither: but if I had wit enough to get out of this wood, I have enough to serve mine own turn.

Tita. Out of this wood do not desire to go:
 Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.
 I am a spirit of no common rate: 140
 The summer still doth tend upon my state;
 And I do love thee: therefore, go with me;
 I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee,
 And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,
 And sing while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep:
 And I will purge thy mortal grossness so
 That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.
 Peaseblossom! Cobweb! Moth! and Mustardseed!

Enter PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, and MUSTARDSEED.

Peas. Ready.

Cob. And I.

Meth. And I.

Mus. And I.

All. Where shall we go?

Tita. Be kind and courteous to this gentleman; 150
 Hop in his walks and gambol in his eyes;
 Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,

With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries;
 The honey-bags steal from the humble bees,
 And for night-tapers crop their waxen thighs
 And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,
 To have my love to bed and to arise;
 And pluck the wings from painted butterflies
 To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes:
 Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

160

Peas. Hail, mortal!

Cob. Hail!

Moth. Hail!

Mus. Hail!

Bot. I cry your worships mercy, heartily: I beseech your worship's name.

Cob. Cobweb.

Bot. I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good Master Cobweb: if I cut my finger, I shall make bold with you. Your name, honest gentleman?

170

Peas. Peaseblossom.

Bot. I pray you, commend me to Mistress Squash, your mother, and to Master Peascod, your father. Good Master Peaseblossom, I shall desire you of more acquaintance too. Your name, I beseech you, sir?

Mus. Mustardseed.

Bot. Good Master Mustardseed, I know your patience well: that same cowardly, giant-like ox-beef hath devoured many a gentleman of your house: I promise you your kindred hath made my eyes water ere now. I desire your more acquaintance, good Master Mustardseed.

181

Tita. Come, wait upon him; lead him to my bower.

The moon methinks looks with a watery eye;
 And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,
 Lamenting some enforced chastity.

Tie up my love's tongue, bring him silently. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II. *Another part of the wood.**Enter* OBERON.

Obe. I wonder if Titania be awaked;
Then, what it was that next came in her eye,
Which she must dote on in extremity.

Enter PUCK.

Here comes my messenger. How now, mad spirit!
What night-rule now about this haunted grove?

Puck. My mistress with a monster is in love.
Near to her close and consecrated bower,
While she was in her dull and sleeping hour,
A crew of patches, rude mechanicals,
That work for bread upon Athenian stalls, 10
Were met together to rehearse a play
Intended for great Theseus' nuptial-day.
The shallowest thick-skin of that barren sort,
Who Pyramus presented, in their sport
Forsook his scene and enter'd in a brake:
When I did him at this advantage take,
An ass's nolle I fixed on his head:
Anon his Thisbe must be answered,
And forth my mimic comes. When they him spy,
As wild geese that the creeping fowler eye, 20
Or russet-pated choughs, many in sort,
Rising and cawing at the gun's report,
Sever themselves and madly sweep the sky,
So, at his sight, away his fellows fly;
And, at our stamp, here o'er and o'er one falls;
He murder cries and help from Athens calls.
Their sense thus weak, lost with their fears thus strong,
Made senseless things begin to do them wrong;
For briers and thorns at their apparel snatch;
Some sleeves, some hats, from yielders all things catch. 30

I led them on in this distracted fear,
 And left sweet Pyramus translated there :
 When in that moment, so it came to pass,
 Titania waked and straightway loved an ass.

Obe. This falls out better than I could devise.
 But hast thou yet latch'd the Athenian's eyes
 With the love-juice, as I did bid thee do ?

Puck. I took him sleeping,—that is finish'd too,—
 And the Athenian woman by his side ;
 That, when he waked, of force she must be eyed. 40

Enter HERMIA and DEMETRIUS.

Obe. Stand close : this is the same Athenian.

Puck. This is the woman, but not this the man.

Dem. O, why rebuke you him that loves you so ?
 Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe.

Her. Now I but chide ; but I should use thee worse,
 For thou, I fear, hast given me cause t' curse.
 If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep,
 Being o'er shoes in blood, plunge in the deep,
 And kill me too.

The sun was not so true unto the day 50
 As he to me : would he have stolen away
 From sleeping Hermia ? I'll believe as soon
 This whole earth may be bored and that the moon
 May through the centre creep and so displease
 Her brother's noontide with the Antipodes.
 It cannot be but thou hast murder'd him ;
 So should a murderer look, so dead, so grim.

Dem. So should the murder'd look, and so should I,
 Pierced through the heart with your stern cruelty :
 Yet you, the murderer, look as bright, as clear, 60
 As yonder Venus in her glimmering sphere.

Her. What's this to my Lysander ? where is he ?
 Ah, good Demetrius, wilt thou give him me ?

Dem. I had rather give his carcass to my hounds.

Her. Out, dog! out, cur! thou drivest me past the bounds

Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him, then?

Henceforth be never number'd among men!

O, once tell true, tell true, even for my sake!

Durst thou have look'd upon him being awake,

And hast thou killed him sleeping? O brave touch! 70

Could not a worm, an adder, do so much?

An adder did it; for with doubler tongue

Than thine, thou serpent, never adder stung.

Dem. You spend your passion on a misprised mood:

I am not guilty of Lysander's blood;

Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.

Her. I pray thee, tell me then that he is well.

Dem. An if I could, what should I get therefore?

Her. A privilege never to see me more.

And from thy hated presence part I so:

80

See me no more, whether he be dead or no.

[Exit.

Dem. There is no following her in this fierce vein:

Here therefore for a while I will remain.

So sorrow's heaviness doth heavier grow

For debt that bankrupt sleep doth sorrow owe;

Which now in some slight measure it will pay,

If for his tender here I make some stay.

[Lies down and sleeps.

Obe. What hast thou done? thou hast mistaken quite

And laid the love-juice on some true-love's sight:

Of thy misprision must perforce ensue

90

Some true love turn'd and not a false turn'd true.

Puck. Then fate o'er-rules, that, one man holding troth,

A million fail, confounding oath on oath.

Obe. About the wood go swifter than the wind,

And, Helena of Athens look thou find:

All fancy-sick she is and pale of cheer,

With sighs of love, that costs the fresh blood dear:

By some illusion see thou bring her here:

I'll charm his eyes against she do appear.

Puck. I go, I go; look how I go,
Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow. 100
[*Exit.*]

Obe. Flower of this purple dye,
Hit with Cupid's archery,
Sink in apple of his eye.
When his love he doth espy,
Let her shine as gloriously
As the Venus of the sky.
When thou wakest, if she be by,
Beg of her for remedy.

Re-enter PUCK.

Puck. Captain of our fairy band, 110
Helena is here at hand;
And the youth, mistook by me,
Pleading for a lover's fee.
Shall we their fond pageant see?
Lord, what fools these mortals be

Obe. Stand aside: the noise they make
Will cause Demetrius to awake.

Puck. Then will two at once woo one;
That must needs be sport alone;
And those things do best please me 120
That befall preposterously.

Enter LYSANDER and HELENA.

Lys. Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?

Scorn and derision never come in tears:

Look, when I vow, I weep; and vows so born,

In their nativity all truth appears.

How can these things in me seem scorn to you,

Bearing the badge of faith, to prove them true?

Hel. You do advance your cunning more and more.

When truth kills truth, O devilish-holy fray!

These vows are Hermia's: will you give her o'er? 130

Weigh oath with oath, and you will nothing weigh:

Your vows to her and me, put in two scales,

Will even weigh, and both as light as tales.

Lys. I had no judgement when to her I swore.

Hel. Nor none, in my mind, now you give her o'er.

Lys. Demetrius loves her, and he loves not you.

Dem. [*Awaking.*] O Helen, goddess, nymph, perfect,
divine!

To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?

Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show

Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow!

140

That pure congealed white, high Taurus' snow,

Fann'd with the eastern wind, turns to a crow

When thou hold'st up thy hand: O, let me kiss

This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss!

Hel. O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent
To set against me for your merriment:

If you were civil and knew courtesy,

You would not do me thus much injury.

Can you not hate me, as I know you do,

But you must join in souls to mock me too?

150

If you were men, as men you are in show,

You would not use a gentle lady so;

To vow, and swear, and superpraise my parts,

When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.

You both are rivals, and love Hermia;

And now both rivals, to mock Helena:

A trim exploit, a manly enterprise,

To conjure tears up in a poor maid's eyes

With your derision! none of noble sort

Would so offend a virgin and extort

160

A poor soul's patience, all to make you sport.

Lys. You are unkind, Demetrius; be not so;

For you love Hermia; this you know I know:

And here, with all good will, with all my heart,

In Hermia's love I yield you up my part;

And yours of Helena to me bequeath,

Whom I do love and will do till my death.

Hel. Never did mockers waste more idle breath.

Dem. Lysander, keep thy *Hermia*; I will none:
 If e'er I loved her, all that love is gone. 170
 My heart to her but as guest-wise sojourn'd,
 And now to *Helen* is it home return'd,
 There to remain.

Lys. *Helen*, it is not so.

Dem. Disparage not the faith thou dost not know,
 Lest, to thy peril, thou aby it dear.
 Look, where thy love comes; yonder is thy dear.

Re-enter HERMIA.

Her. Dark night, that from the eye his function takes,
 The ear more quick of apprehension makes;
 Wherein it doth impair the seeing sense,
 It pays the hearing double recompense. 180
 Thou art not by mine eye, *Lysander*, found;
 Mine ear, I thank it, brought me to thy sound.
 But why unkindly didst thou leave me so?

Lys. Why should he stay, whom love doth press to go?

Her. What love could press *Lysander* from my side?

Lys. *Lysander's* love, that would not let him bide,
 Fair *Helena*, who more engilds the night
 Than all yon fiery oes and eyes of light.
 Why seek'st thou me? could not this make thee know,
 The hate I bear thee made me leave thee so? 190

Her. You speak not as you think: it cannot be.

Hel. Lo, she is one of this confederacy!
 Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three
 To fashion this false sport, in spite of me.
 Injurious *Hermia*! most ungrateful maid!
 Have you conspired, have you with these contrived
 To bait me with this foul derision?
 Is all the counsel that we two have shared,
 The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,
 When we have chid the hasty-footed time 200
 For parting us,—O, is all forgot?
 All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence?

We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
 Have with our needles created both one flower,
 Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
 Both warbling of one song, both in one key,
 As if our hands, our sides, voices and minds,
 Had been incorporate. So we grew together,
 Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
 But yet an union in partition ;
 Two lovely berries moulded on one stem ;
 So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart ;
 Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,
 Due but to one and crowned with one crest.
 And will you rent our ancient love asunder,
 To join with men in scorning your poor friend?
 It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly:
 Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it,
 Though I alone do feel the injury.

210

Her. I am amazed at your passionate words.
 I scorn you not: it seems that you scorn me.

220

Hel. Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn,
 To follow me and praise my eyes and face?
 And made your other love, Demetrius,
 Who even but now did spurn me with his foot,
 To call me goddess, nymph, divine and rare,
 Precious, celestial? Wherefore speaks he this
 To her he hates? and wherefore doth Lysander
 Deny your love, so rich within his soul,
 And tender me, forsooth, affection,
 But by your setting on, by your consent?
 What though I be not so in grace as you,
 So hung upon with love, so fortunate,
 But miserable most, to love unloved?
 This you should pity rather than despise.

230

Her. I understand not what you mean by this.

Hel. Ay, do, persevere, counterfeit sad looks,
 Make mouths upon me when I turn my back;
 Wink each at other; hold the sweet jest up:

This sport, well carried, shall be chronicled. 240
 If you have any pity, grace, or manners,
 You would not make me such an argument.
 But fare ye well: 'tis partly my own fault;
 Which death or absence soon shall remedy.

Lys. Stay, gentle Helena; hear my excuse:
 My love, my life, my soul, fair Helena!

Hel. O excellent!

Her. Sweet, do not scorn her so.

Dem. If she cannot entreat, I can compel.

Lys. Thou canst compel no more than she entreat:
 Thy threats have no more strength than her weak prayers.
 Helen, I love thee; by my life I do: 251
 I swear by that which I will lose for thee,
 To prove him false that says I love thee not.

Dem. I say I love thee more than he can do.

Lys. If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too.

Dem. Quick, come!

Her. Lysander, whereto tends all this?

Lys. Away, you Ethiope!

Dem. No, no; he'll . . .
 Seem to break loose; take on as you would follow,
 But yet come not: you are a tame man, go!

Lys. Hang off, thou cat, thou burr! vile thing, let loose,
 Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent! 261

Her. Why are you grown so rude? what change is this?
 Sweet love,—

Lys. Thy love! out, tawny Tartar, out!
 Out, loathed medicine! hated potion, hence!

Her. Do you not jest?

Hel. Yes, sooth; and so do you.

Lys. Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.

Dem. I would I had your bond, for I perceive
 A weak bond holds you: I'll not trust your word.

Lys. What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead?
Although I hate her, I'll not harm her so. 270

Her. What, can you do me greater harm than hate?
Hate me! wherefore? O me! what news, my love!
Am not I *Hermia*? are not you *Lysander*?
I am as fair now as I was erewhile.
Since night you loved me; yet since night you left me:
Why, then you left me—O, the gods forbid!—
In earnest, shall I say?

Lys. Ay, by my life;
And never did desire to see thee more.
Therefore be out of hope, of question, of doubt;
Be certain, nothing truer; 'tis no jest 280
That I do hate thee and love *Helena*.

Her. O me! you juggler! you canker-blossom!
You thief of love! what, have you come by night
And stolen my love's heart from him?

Hel. Fine, i' faith!
Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,
No touch of bashfulness? What, will you tear
Impatient answers from my gentle tongue?
Fie, fie! you counterfeit, you puppet, you!

Her. Puppet? why so? ay, that way goes the game.
Now I perceive that she hath made compare 290
Between our statures; she hath urged her height;
And with her personage, her tall personage,
Her height, forsooth, she hath prevail'd with him.
And are you grown so high in his esteem,
Because I am so dwarfish and so low?
How low am I, thou painted maypole? speak;
How low am I? I am not yet so low
But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

Hel. I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,
Let her not hurt me: I was never curst; 300
I have no gift at all in shrewishness;
I am a right maid for my cowardice:
Let her not strike me. You perhaps may think,

Because she is something lower than myself,
That I can match her.

Her. Lower! hark again.

Hel. Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.
I evermore did love you, Hermia,
Did ever keep your counsels, never wrong'd you;
Save that, in love unto Demetrius,
I told him of your stealth unto this wood. 310
He follow'd you; for love I follow'd him;
But he hath chid me hence and threaten'd me
To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too:
And now, so you will let me quiet go,
To Athens will I bear my folly back
And follow you no further: let me go:
You see how simple and how fond I am.

Her. Why, get you gone: who is't that hinders you?

Hel. A foolish heart, that I leave here behind.

Her. What, with Lysander?

Hel. With Demetrius. 320

Lys. Be not afraid; she shall not harm thee, Helena.

Dem. No, sir, she shall not, though you take her part.

Hel. O, when she's angry, she is keen and shrewd!
She was a vixen when she went to school;
And though she be but little, she is fierce.

Her. 'Little' again! nothing but 'low' and 'little'!
Why will you suffer her to flout me thus?
Let me come to her.

Lys. Get you gone, you dwarf;
You minimus, of hindering knot-grass made;
You bead, you acorn.

Dem. You are too officious 330
In her behalf that scorns your services.
Let her alone: speak not of Helena;
Take not her part; for, if thou dost intend

Never so little show of love to her,
Thou shalt aby it.

Lys. Now she holds me not ;
Now follow, if thou darest, to try whose right,
Of thine or mine, is most in Helena.

Dem. Follow! nay, I'll go with thee, cheek by jole.
[*Exeunt Lysander and Demetrius.*]

Her. You, mistress, all this coil is 'long of you:
Nay, go not back.

Hel. I will not trust you, I, 340
Nor longer stay in your curst company.
Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray,
My legs are longer though, to run away. [*Exit.*]

Her. I am amazed, and know not what to say. [*Exit.*]

Obe. This is thy negligence, still thou mistakest,
Or else committ'st thy knaveries wilfully.

Puck. Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.
Did not you tell me I should know the man
By the Athenian garments he had on?
And so far blameless proves my enterprise, 350
That I have 'nointed an Athenian's eyes;
And so far am I glad it so did sort
As this their jangling I esteem a sport.

Obe. Thou see'st these lovers seek a place to fight:
Hie therefore, Robin, overcast the night;
The starry welkin cover thou anon
With drooping fog as black as Acheron,
And lead these testy rivals so astray
As one come not within another's way.
Like to Lysander sometime frame thy tongue, 360
Then stir Demetrius up with bitter wrong;
And sometime rail thou like Demetrius;
And from each other look thou lead them thus,
Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep
With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep:
Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye;
Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,

To take from thence all error with his might,
 And make his eyeballs roll with wonted sight.
 When they next wake all this derision 370
 Shall seem a dream and fruitless vision,
 And back to Athens shall the lovers wend,
 With league whose date till death shall never end.
 Whiles I in this affair do thee employ,
 I'll to my queen and beg her Indian boy;
 And then I will her charmed eye release
 From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

Puck. My fairy lord, this must be done with haste,
 For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,
 And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger; 380
 At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,
 Troop home to churchyards: damned spirits all,
 That in crossways and floods have burial,
 Already to their wormy beds are gone;
 For fear lest day should look their shames upon,
 They wilfully themselves exile from light
 And must for aye consort with black-brow'd night.

Obe. But we are spirits of another sort:
 I with the morning's love have oft made sport,
 And, like a forester, the groves may tread, 390
 Even till the eastern gate, all fiery-red,
 Opening on Neptune with fair blessed beams,
 Turns into yellow gold his salt green streams.
 But, notwithstanding, haste; make no delay:
 We may effect this business yet ere day. [*Exit.*]

Puck. Up and down, up and down,
 I will lead them up and down:
 I am fear'd in field and town:
 Goblin, lead them up and down.

Here comes one. 400

Re-enter LYSANDER.

Lys. Where art thou, proud Demetrius? speak thou
 now.

Puck. Here, villain; drawn and ready. Where art thou?

Lys. I will be with thee straight.

Puck. Follow me, then,
To plainer ground. [*Exit Lysander, as following the voice.*]

Re-enter DEMETRIUS.

Dem. Lysander! speak again:
Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled?
Speak! In some bush? Where dost thou hide thy head?

Puck. Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,
Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars,
And wilt not come? Come, recreant; come, thou child;
I'll whip thee with a rod: he is defiled 410
That draws a sword on thee.

Dem. Yea, art thou there?

Puck. Follow my voice: we'll try no manhood here.

[*Exeunt.*]

Re-enter LYSANDER.

Lys. He goes before me and still dares me on:
When I come where he calls, then he is gone.
The villain is much lighter-heel'd than I:
I follow'd fast, but faster he did fly;
That fallen am I in dark uneven way,
And here will rest me. [*Lies down.*] Come, thou gentle
day!

For if but once thou show me thy grey light,
I'll find Demetrius and revenge this spite. [*Sleeps.*]

Re-enter PUCK and DEMETRIUS.

Puck. Ho, ho, ho! Coward, why comest thou not? 421

Dem. Abide me, if thou darest; for well I wot
Thou runn'st before me, shifting every place,
And darest not stand, nor look me in the face.
Where art thou now?

Puck. Come hither: I am here.

Dem. Nay, then, thou mock'st me. Thou shalt buy this
dear,
If ever I thy face by daylight see:
Now, go thy way. Faintness constraineth me

To measure out my length on this cold bed.
By day's approach look to be visited. [*Lies down and sleeps.*]

Re-enter HELENA.

Hel. O weary night, O long and tedious night, 431
Abate thy hours! Shine comforts from the east,
That I may back to Athens by daylight,
From these that my poor company detest:
And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye,
Steal me awhile from mine own company.
[*Lies down and sleeps.*]

Puck. Yet but three? Come one more;
Two of both kinds makes up four.
Here she comes, curst and sad:
Cupid is a knavish lad, 440
Thus to make poor females mad.

Re-enter HERMIA.

Her. Never so weary, never so in woe,
Bedabbled with the dew and torn with briers,
I can no further crawl, no further go;
My legs can keep no pace with my desires.
Here will I rest me till the break of day.
Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray!
[*Lies down and sleeps.*]

Puck. On the ground
Sleep sound:
I'll apply 450
To your eye,
Gentle lover, remedy.
[*Squeezing the juice on Lysander's eyes.*]
When thou wakest,
Thou takest
True delight
In the sight
Of thy former lady's eye:
And the country proverb known,
That every man should take his own,
In your waking shall be shown: 460

Jack shall have Jill ;

Nought shall go ill ;

The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well.

[*Exit.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *The same.* LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA,
and HERMIA lying asleep.

Enter TITANIA and BOTTOM ; PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB,
MOTH, MUSTARDSEED, and other Fairies attending ; OBERON
behind unseen.

Tita. Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,

While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,

And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,

And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

Bot. Where's Peaseblossom ?

Peas. Ready.

Bot. Scratch my head, Peaseblossom. Where's Mounsieur
Cobweb ?

Cob. Ready. 9

Bot. Mounsieur Cobweb, good mounsieur, get you your
weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hipped humble-bee
on the top of a thistle ; and, good mounsieur, bring me the
honey-bag. Do not fret yourself too much in the action,
mounsieur ; and, good mounsieur, have a care the honey-bag
break not ; I would be loath to have you overflown with a
honey-bag, signior. Where's Mounsieur Mustardseed ?

Mus. Ready.

Bot. Give me your neaf, Mounsieur Mustardseed. Pray
you, leave your courtesy, good mounsieur.

Mus. What's your will ? 20

Bot. Nothing, good mounsieur, but to help Cavalery Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's, mounsieur; for methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face; and I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me, I must scratch.

Tita. What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love?

Bot. I have a reasonable good ear in music. Let's have the tongs and the bones.

Tita. Or say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat.

Bot. Truly, a peck of provender: I could munch your good dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle of hay: good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow. 32

Tita. I have a venturous fairy that shall seek
The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee new nuts.

Bot. I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas. But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me; I have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

Tita. Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.
Fairies, be gone, and be all ways away. [*Exeunt fairies.*
So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle 40
Gently entwist; the female ivy so
Enrings the barks fingers of the elm.
O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee! [*They sleep.*

Enter PUCK.

Obe. [*Advancing.*] Welcome, good Robin. See'st thou
this sweet sight?

Her dotage now I do begin to pity:
For, meeting her of late behind the wood,
Seeking sweet favours for this hateful fool,
I did upbraid her and fall out with her;
For she his hairy temples then had rounded 50
With coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers;
And that same dew, which sometime on the buds
Was wont to swell like round and orient pearls,
Stood now within the pretty flowerets' eyes
Like tears that did their own disgrace bewail.

When I had at my pleasure taunted her
 And she in mild terms begg'd my patience,
 I then did ask of her her changeling child;
 Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent
 To bear him to my bower in fairy land. 60

And now I have the boy, I will undo
 This hateful imperfection of her eyes:
 And, gentle Puck, take this transformed scalp
 From off the head of this Athenian swain;
 That, he awaking when the other do,
 May all to Athens back again repair
 And think no more of this night's accidents
 But as the fierce vexation of a dream.
 But first I will release the fairy queen.

Be as thou wast wont to be;

70

See as thou wast wont to see:

Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower

Hath such force and blessed power.

Now, my Titania; wake you, my sweet queen.

Tita. My Oberon! what visions have I seen!
 Methought I was enamour'd of an ass!

Obe. There lies your love.

Tita. How came these things to pass?
 O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now!

Obe. Silence awhile. Robin, take off this head.

Titania, music call; and strike more dead 80
 Than common sleep of all these five the sense.

Tita. Music, ho! music, such as charmeth sleep! [*Music, still.*]

Puck. Now, when thou wakest, with thine own fool's eyes
 peep.

Obe. Sound, music! Come, my queen, take hands with me,
 And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.
 Now thou and I are new in amity
 And will to-morrow midnight solemnly
 Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly
 And bless it to all fair prosperity:

There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be
Wedded, with Theseus, all in jollity. 90

Puck. Fairy king, attend, and mark :
I do hear the morning lark.

Obe. Then, my queen, in silence sad,
Trip we after night's shade :
We the globe can compass soon,
Swifter than the wandering moon.

Tita. Come, my lord, and in our flight
Tell me how it came this night
That I sleeping here was found 100
With these mortals on the ground. [*Exeunt.*
[*Horns winded within.*

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, and train.

The. Go, one of you, find out the forester ;
For now our observation is perform'd ;
And since we have the vaward of the day,
My love shall hear the music of my hounds.
Uncouple in the western valley ; let them go :
Dispatch, I say, and find the forester. [*Exit an Attendant.*
We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top
And mark the musical confusion
Of hounds and echo in conjunction. 110

Hip. I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear
With hounds of Sparta : never did I hear
Such gallant chiding ; for, besides the groves,
The skies, the fountains, every region near
Seem'd all one mutual cry : I never heard
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

The. My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
So flew'd, so sanded, and their heads are hung
With ears that sweep away the morning dew ; 120
Crook-knee'd, and dew-lapp'd like Thessalian bulls ;
Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,
Each under each. A cry more tuneable

Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn,
 In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly:
 Judge when you hear. But, soft! what nymphs are these?

Ege. My lord, this is my daughter here asleep;
 And this, Lysander; this Demetrius is;
 This Helena, old Nedar's Helena:
 I wonder of their being here together.

130

The. No doubt they rose up early to observe
 The rite of May, and, hearing our intent,
 Came here in grace of our solemnity.
 But speak, Egeus; is not this the day
 That Hermia should give answer of her choice?

Ege. It is, my lord.

The. Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns.
 [*Horn and shouts within. Lysander, Demetrius, Helena, and
 Hermia, awake and start up.*]

Good morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past:
 Begin these wood-birds but to couple now?

Lys. Pardon, my lord.

The. I pray you all, stand up. 140

I know you two are rival enemies:
 How comes this gentle concord in the world,
 That hatred is so far from jealousy,
 To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity?

Lys. My lord, I shall reply amazedly,
 Half sleep, half waking: but as yet, I swear,
 I cannot truly say how I came here;
 But, as I think,—for truly would I speak,
 And now I do bethink me, so it is,—
 I came with Hermia hither: our intent
 Was to be gone from Athens, where we might,
 Without the peril of the Athenian law.

150

Ege. Enough, enough, my lord; you have enough:
 I beg the law, the law, upon his head.
 They would have stolen away; they would, Demetrius,
 Thereby to have defeated you and me,

You of your wife and me of my consent,
Of my consent that she should be your wife.

Dem. My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,
Of this their purpose hither to this wood; 160
And I in fury hither follow'd them,
Fair Helena in fancy following me.
But, my good lord, I wot not by what power,—
But by some power it is,—my love to Hermia,
Melted as the snow, seems to me now
As the remembrance of an idle gawd
Which in my childhood I did dote upon;
And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,
The object and the pleasure of mine eye,
Is only Helena. To her, my lord, 170
Was I betroth'd ere I saw Hermia:
But, like in sickness, did I loathe this food;
But, as in health, come to my natural taste,
Now I do wish it, love it, long for it,
And will for evermore be true to it.

The. Fair lovers, you are fortunately met:
Of this discourse we more will hear anon.
Egeus, I will overbear your will;
For in the temple, by and by, with us
These couples shall eternally be knit: 180
And, for the morning now is something worn,
Our purposed hunting shall be set aside.
Away with us to Athens; three and three,
We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.
Come, Hippolyta.

[*Exeunt Theseus, Hippolyta, Egeus, and train.*]

Dem. These things seem small and undistinguishable,
Like far-off mountains turned into clouds.

Her. Methinks I see these things with parted eye,
When every thing seems double.

Hel. So methinks:
And I have found Demetrius like a jewel, 190
Mine own, and not mine own.

Dem. Are you sure
That we are awake? It seems to me
That yet we sleep, we dream. Do not you think
The duke was here, and bid us follow him?

Her. Yea; and my father.

Hel. And Hippolyta.

Lys. And he did bid us follow to the temple.

Dem. Why, then, we are awake: let's follow him;
And by the way let us recount our dreams. [*Exeunt.*]

Bot. [*Awaking.*] When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer: my next is, 'Most fair Pyramus.' Heigh-ho! Peter Quince! Flute, the bellows-mender! Snout, the tinker! Starveling! God's my life, stolen hence, and left me asleep! I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was: man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was—there is no man can tell what. Methought I was,—and methought I had,—but man is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream: it shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom; and I will sing it in the latter end of the play, before the duke: peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II. *Athens.* QUINCE'S *house.*

Enter QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING.

Quin. Have you sent to Bottom's house? is he come home yet?

Star. He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt he is transported.

Flu. If he come not, then the play is marred: it goes not forward, doth it?

Quin. It is not possible: you have not a man in all Athens able to discharge Pyramus but he.

Flu. No, he hath simply the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens. 10

Quin. Yea, and the best person too; and he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.

Flu. You must say 'paragon': a paramour is, God bless us, a thing of naught.

Enter SNUG.

Snug. Masters, the duke is coming from the temple, and there is two or three lords and ladies more married: if our sport had gone forward, we had all been made men.

Flu. O sweet bully Bottom! Thus hath he lost sixpence a day during his life; he could not have 'scaped sixpence a day: an the duke had not given him sixpence a day for playing Pyramus, I'll be hanged; he would have deserved it: sixpence a day in Pyramus, or nothing.

Enter BOTTOM.

Bot. Where are these lads? where are these hearts?

Quin. Bottom! O most courageous day! O most happy hour!

Bot. Masters, I am to discourse wonders: but ask me not what; for if I tell you, I am no true Athenian. I will tell you every thing, right as it fell out.

Quin. Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

Bot. Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is, that the duke hath dined. Get your apparel together, good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps; meet presently at the palace; every man look o'er his part; for the short and the long is, our play is preferred. In any case, let Thisby have clean linen; and let not him that plays the lion pare his nails, for they shall hang out for the lion's claws. And, most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to

utter sweet breath; and I do not doubt but to hear them say, it is a sweet comedy. No more words: away! go, away!
[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I. *Athens. The palace of THESEUS.*

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, Lords, and Attendants.

Hip. 'Tis strange, my Theseus, that these lovers speak of.

The. More strange than true: I never may believe
 These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.
 Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
 Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
 More than cool reason ever comprehends.
 The lunatic, the lover and the poet
 Are of imagination all compact:
 One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,
 That is, the madman: the lover, all as frantic, 10
 Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:
 The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
 Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
 And as imagination bodies forth
 The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
 Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
 A local habitation and a name.
 Such tricks hath strong imagination,
 That, if it would but apprehend some joy,
 It comprehends some bringer of that joy; 20
 Or in the night, imagining some fear,
 How easy is a bush supposed a bear!

Hip. But all the story of the night told over,
 And all their minds transfigured so together,

More witnesseth than fancy's images
And grows to something of great constancy;
But, howsoever, strange and admirable.

The. Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.

Enter LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HERMIA, *and* HELENA.

Joy, gentle friends! joy and fresh days of love
Accompany your hearts!

Lys. More than to us 30
Wait in your royal walks, your board, your bed!

The. Come now; what masques, what dances shall we
have,

To wear away this long age of three hours
Between our after-supper and bed-time?
Where is our usual manager of mirth?
What revels are in hand? Is there no play,
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour?
Call Philostrate.

Phil. Here, mighty Theseus.

The. Say, what abridgement have you for this evening?
What masque? what music? How shall we beguile 40
The lazy time, if not with some delight?

Phil. There is a brief how many sports are ripe:
Make choice of which your highness will see first.

[Giving a paper.]

The. *[Reads]* 'The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung
By an Athenian cunuch to the harp.'

We'll none of that: that have I told my love,
In glory of my kinsman Hercules.

[Reads] 'The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals,
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.'
That is an old device; and it was play'd 50
When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.

[Reads] 'The thrice three Muses mourning for the death
Of Learning, late deceased in beggary.'
That is some satire, keen and critical,
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.

[*Reads*] 'A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus
And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth.'

Merry and tragical! tedious and brief!

That is, hot ice and wondrous strange snow.

How shall we find the concord of this discord? 60

Phil. A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,

Which is as brief as I have known a play;

But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,

Which makes it tedious; for in all the play

There is not one word apt, one player fitted:

And tragical, my noble lord, it is;

For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.

Which, when I saw rehearsed, I must confess,

Made mine eyes water; but more merry tears

The passion of loud laughter never shed. 70

The. What are they that do play it?

Phil. Hard-handed men that work in Athens here,

Which never labour'd in their minds till now,

And now have toil'd their unbreathed memories

With this same play, against your nuptial.

The. And we will hear it.

Phil. No, my noble lord;

It is not for you: I have heard it over,

And it is nothing, nothing in the world;

Unless you can find sport in their intents,

Extremely stretch'd and conn'd with cruel pain, 80

To do you service.

The. I will hear that play;

For never anything can be amiss,

When simpleness and duty tender it.

Go, bring them in: and take your places, ladies.

[*Exit Philostrate.*]

Hip. I love not to see wretchedness o'ercharged
And duty in his service perishing.

The. Why, gentle sweet, you shall see no such thing.

Hip. He says they can do nothing in this kind.

The. The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing.
 Our sport shall be to take what they mistake: 90
 And what poor duty cannot do, noble respect
 Takes it in might, not merit.
 Where I have come, great clerks have purposed
 To greet me with premeditated welcomes;
 Where I have seen them shiver and look pale,
 Make periods in the midst of sentences,
 Throttle their practised accent in their fears
 And in conclusion dumbly have broke off,
 Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,
 Out of this silence yet I pick'd a welcome; 100
 And in the modesty of fearful duty
 I read as much as from the rattling tongue
 Of saucy and audacious eloquence.
 Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity
 In least speak most, to my capacity.

Re-enter PHILOSTRATE.

Phil. So please your grace, the Prologue is address'd.

The. Let him approach. [*Flourish of trumpets.*]

Enter QUINCE for the Prologue.

Pro. If we offend, it is with our good will.
 That you should think, we come not to offend,
 But with good will. To show our simple skill, 110
 That is the true beginning of our end.

Consider then we come but in despite.

We do not come as minding to content you,
 Our true intent is. All for your delight

We are not here. That you should here repent you,
 The actors are at hand and by their show
 You shall know all that you are like to know.

The. This fellow doth not stand upon points.

Lys. He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt; he knows
 not the stop. A good moral, my lord: it is not enough to
 speak, but to speak true. 121

Hip. Indeed he hath played on his prologue like a child on a recorder; a sound, but not in government.

The. His speech was like a tangled chain; nothing impaired, but all disordered. Who is next?

Enter PYRAMUS *and* THISBE, WALL, MOONSHINE, *and* LION.

Pro. Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show;
But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.

This man is Pyramus, if you would know;

This beauteous lady Thisby is certain.

This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present 130

Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder;
And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content

To whisper. At the which let no man wonder.

This man, with lanthorn, dog, and bush of thorn,

Presenteth Moonshine; for, if you will know,

By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn

To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.

This grisly beast, which Lion hight by name,

The trusty Thisby, coming first by night,

Did scare away, or rather did affright; 140

And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,

Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.

Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,

And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain:

Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,

He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast;

And Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade,

His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,

Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain

At large discourse, while here they do remain. 150

[*Exeunt* Prologue, *Thisbe*, *Lion*, *and* *Moonshine*.]

The. I wonder if the lion be to speak.

Dem. No wonder, my lord: one lion may, when many asses do.

Wall. In this same interlude it doth befall
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;

And such a wall, as I would have you think,
 That had in it a crannied hole or chink,
 Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,
 Did whisper often very secretly.
 This loam, this rough-cast and this stone doth show 160
 That I am that same wall; the truth is so:
 And this the cranny is, right and sinister,
 Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

The. Would you desire lime and hair to speak better?

Dem. It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard discourse, my lord.

Enter PYRAMUS.

The. Pyramus draws near the wall: silence!

Py. O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!
 O night, which ever art when day is not!

O night, O night! alack, alack, alack, 170

I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot!

And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,

That stand'st between her father's ground and mine!

Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,

Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne!

[Wall holds up his fingers.]

Thanks, courteous wall: Jove shield thee well for this!

But what see I? No Thisby do I see.

O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!

Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

The. The wall, methinks, being sensible, should curse again. 181

Py. No, in truth, sir, he should not. 'Deceiving me' is Thisby's cue: she is to enter now, and I am to spy her through the wall. You shall see, it will fall pat as I told you. Yonder she comes.

Enter THISBE.

This. O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,
 For parting my fair Pyramus and me!

My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones,

Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

Pyr. I see a voice: now will I to the chink,
To spy an I can hear my Thisby's face. 190

Thisby!

This. My love thou art, my love I think.

Pyr. Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;
And, like Limander, am I trusty still.

This. And I like Helen, till the fates me kill.

Pyr. Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

This. As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

Pyr. O, kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!

This. I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

Pyr. Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

This. 'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay. 201

[*Exeunt Pyramus and Thisbe.*

Wall. Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged so:
And, being done, thus Wall away doth go. [*Exit.*

The. Now is the mural down between the two neighbours.

Dem. No remedy, my lord, when walls are so wilful to
hear without warning.

Hip. This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

The. The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst
are no worse, if imagination amend them.

Hip. It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

The. If we imagine no worse of them than they of them-
selves, they may pass for excellent men. Here come two
noble beasts, in a man and a lion. 213

Enter LION and MOONSHINE.

Lion. You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,
May now perchance both quake and tremble here,

When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.

Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am

A lion fell, nor else no lion's dam;

For, if I should as lion come in strife

Into this place, 'twere pity on my life. 220

The. A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience.

Dem. The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I saw.

Lys. This lion is a very fox for his valour.

The. True; and a goose for his discretion.

Dem. Not so, my lord; for his valour cannot carry his discretion; and the fox carries the goose.

The. His discretion, I am sure, cannot carry his valour; for the goose carries not the fox. It is well: leave it to his discretion, and let us listen to the moon. 230

Moon. This lanthorn doth the horned moon present;—

Dem. He should have worn the horns on his head.

The. He is no crescent, and his horns are invisible within the circumference.

Moon. This lanthorn doth the horned moon present; Myself the man i' the moon do seem to be.

The. This is the greatest error of all the rest: the man should be put into the lanthorn. How is it else the man i' the moon?

Dem. He dares not come there for the candle; for, you see, it is already in snuff. 241

Hip. I am awearry of this moon: would he would change!

The. It appears, by his small light of discretion, that he is in the wane; but yet, in courtesy, in all reason, we must stay the time.

Lys. Proceed, Moon.

Moon. All that I have to say, is, to tell you that the lanthorn is the moon; I, the man in the moon; this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush; and this dog, my dog. 249

Dem. Why, all these should be in the lanthorn; for all these are in the moon. But, silence! here comes Thisbe.

Enter THISBE.

This. This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love?

Lion. [Roaring] Oh——

[*Thisbe runs off.*]

Dem. Well roared, Lion.

The. Well run, Thisbe.

Hip. Well shone, Moon. Truly the moon shines with a good grace. [*The Lion shakes Thisbe's mantle, and exit.*]

The. Well moused, Lion.

Lys. And so the lion vanished.

Dem. And then came Pyramus. 260

Enter PYRAMUS.

Pyr. Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams;
I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright;
For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,
I trust to take of truest Thisby sight.

But stay, O spite!

But mark, poor knight,

What dreadful dole is here!

Eyes, do you see?

How can it be?

O dainty duck! O dear! 270

Thy mantle good,

What, stain'd with blood!

Approach, ye Furies fell!

O Fates, come, come,

Cut thread and thrum;

Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!

The. This passion, and the death of a dear friend, would go near to make a man look sad.

Hip. Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

Pyr. O wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame? 280
Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear:
Which is—no, no—which was the fairest dame

That lived, that loved, that liked, that look'd with cheer.

Come, tears, confound;

Out, sword, and wound

The pap of Pyramus;

Ay, that left pap,

Where heart doth hop: [*Stabs himself.*]

Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.

Now am I dead, 290

Now am I fled;

My soul is in the sky:

Tongue, lose thy light;

Moon, take thy flight: [Exit Moonshine.

Now die, die, die, die, die. [Dies.

Dem. No die, but an ace, for him; for he is but one.

Lys. Less than an ace, man; for he is dead; he is nothing.

The. With the help of a surgeon he might yet recover, and prove an ass.

Hip. How chance Moonshine is gone before Thisbe comes back and finds her lover? 301

The. She will find him by starlight. Here she comes; and her passion ends the play.

Re-enter THISBE.

Hip. Methinks she should not use a long one for such a Pyramus: I hope she will be brief.

Dem. A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which Thisbe, is the better; he for a man, God warrant us; she for a woman, God bless us.

Lys. She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

Dem. And thus she means, videlicet:— 310

This. Asleep, my love?

What, dead, my dove?

O Pyramus, arise!

Speak, speak. Quite dumb?

Dead, dead? A tomb

Must cover thy sweet eyes.

These lily lips,

This cherry nose,

These yellow cowslip cheeks,

Are gone, are gone: 320

Lovers, make moan:

His eyes were green as leeks.

O Sisters Three,

Come, come to me,

With hands as pale as milk;
 Lay them in gore,
 Since you have shore
 With shears his thread of silk.
 Tongue, not a word:
 Come, trusty sword: 330
 Come, blade, my breast imbrue: [*Stabs herself.*
 And, farewell, friends;
 Thus Thisby ends:
 Adieu, adieu, adieu. [*Dies.*

The. Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

Dem. Ay, and Wall too.

Bot. [*Starting up.*] No, I assure you; the wall is down that parted their fathers. Will it please you to see the epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance between two of our company?

The. No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no excuse. Never excuse; for when the players are all dead, there need none to be blamed. Marry, if he that writ it had played Pyramus and hanged himself in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy: and so it is, truly; and very notably discharged. But, come, your Bergomask: let your epilogue alone. [*A dance.*

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve:

Lovers, to bed; 'tis almost fairy time.

I fear we shall out-sleep the coming morn

As much as we this night have overwatch'd. 350

This palpable gross play hath well beguiled

The heavy gait of night. Sweet friends, to bed.

A fortnight hold we this solemnity,

In nightly revels and new jollity. [*Exeunt.*

Enter PUCK.

Puck. Now the hungry lion roars,

And the wolf behowls the moon;

Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,

All with weary task fordone.

Now the wasted brands do glow,

Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud, 360

Puts the wretch that lies in woe
 In remembrance of a shroud.
 Now it is the time of night
 That the graves all gaping wide,
 Every one lets forth his sprite,
 In the church-way paths to glide:
 And we fairies, that do run
 By the triple Hecate's team,
 From the presence of the sun,
 Following darkness like a dream,
 Now are frolic: not a mouse
 Shall disturb this hallow'd house:
 I am sent with broom before,
 To sweep the dust behind the door.

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Enter OBERON and TITANIA with their train.

Obe. Through the house give glimmering light,
 By the dead and drowsy fire:
 Every elf and fairy sprite
 Hop as light as bird from brier;
 And this ditty, after me,
 Sing, and dance it trippingly.

380

Tita. First, rehearse your song by rote,
 To each word a warbling note:
 Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
 Will we sing, and bless this place. [*Song and dance.*]

Obe. Now, until the break of day,
 Through this house each fairy stray.
 To the best bride-bed will we,
 Which by us shall blessed be;
 And the issue there create
 Ever shall be fortunate.

390

So shall all the couples three
 Ever true in loving be;
 And the blots of Nature's hand
 Shall not in their issue stand;
 Never mole, hare lip, nor scar,
 Nor mark prodigious such as are

Despised in nativity,
 Shall upon their children be.
 With this field-dew consecrate,
 Every fairy take his gait; 400
 And each several chamber bless,
 Through this palace, with sweet peace;
 And the owner of it blest
 Ever shall in safety rest.
 Trip away; make no stay;
 Meet me all by break of day.

[*Exeunt Oberon, Titania and train.*]

Puck. If we shadows have offended,
 Think but this, and all is mended,
 That you have but slumber'd here
 While these visions did appear. 410
 And this weak and idle theme,
 No more yielding but a dream,
 Gentles, do not reprehend:
 If you pardon, we will mend:
 And, as I am an honest Puck,
 If we have unearned luck
 Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,
 We will make amends ere long;
 Else the Puck a liar call:
 So, good night unto you all. 420
 Give me your hands, if we be friends,
 And Robin shall restore amends. [Exit.]

NOTES.

ACT I.

Scene I.

1. The names of Theseus and Hippolyta queen of the Amazons may have been borrowed by Shakespeare from Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, although there is nothing else in the play for which he can have been indebted to the same source. But he was no doubt acquainted with the story of Theseus in North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*, and hence also he may have taken the Greek names which he uses, Egeus, Lysander, Demetrius, and Philostrate, which all occur in that work. Philostrate however is also the name assumed by Arcite in the *Knight's Tale*, l. 1428.

4. *She lingers my desires*, protracts, delays the accomplishment of my desires. For 'linger' in this transitive sense see Richard II, ii. 2. 72 :

'Who gently would dissolve the bands of life,

Which false hope lingers in extremity.'

And Othello, iv. 2. 231 : 'Unless his abode be lingered here by some accident.'

5. *a step-dame, or a dowager*, who has a life interest in the property which falls to the heir at her death. Whalley quotes Horace [Epist. i. 1. 21, 22] :

'ut piger annus

Pupillis quos dura premit custodia matrum.'

6. *withering out*, causing the revenue to dwindle as she herself withers away. For the phrase Steevens quotes from Chapman's Homer, *Iliad* iv. [528] :

'And there the goodly plant lies withering out his grace.'

10. *New-bent*. Rowe's reading; the quartos and folios have 'Now bent.'

11. *solemnities*, applied to the festivities on the solemnization of marriage, as in King John, ii. 1. 555, of the marriage of Blaunch and the Dauphin :

'Call the Lady Constance :

Some speedy messenger bid her repair

To our solemnity.'

13. *fert*, lively; used in a good sense, and not as now as equivalent to something a little less than impudent, saucy. Compare *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. 2. 272 :

'This fert Biron was out of countenance quite.'

Cotgrave (Fr. Dict.) has, 'Godinet: m. ette: f. Prettie, dapper, feat, peart, indifferently handsome. Godinette; f. A prettie peart lasse; a louing, or louelic girle.' So Milton, *Comus*, 118:

'And on the tawny sands and shelves

Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves.'

It is probably connected with the Fr. *appert* (whence *malapert*), for which Cotgrave gives the equivalents 'Expert, readie, dexter, prompt, actiue, nimble; feat, handsome, in that he does.' Mr. Wedgwood however connects it with 'perk,' 'to perk up the head, to prick up the head, or appear lively.' In this sense 'pert' is used as a verb in Beaumont and Fletcher, *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, i. 1: 'Sirrah, didst thou ever see a prettier child? how it behaves itself, I warrant ye! and speaks and looks, and perts up the head.'

15. *companion*, fellow. These two words have completely exchanged their meanings in later usage. 'Companion' is not now used contemptuously as it once was, and as 'fellow' frequently is. Compare 2 *Henry IV*, ii. 4. 132: 'I scorn you, scurvy companion.'

Ib. *pomp*. See below, note on l. 19.

19. *With pomp, with triumph*. A triumph was a public exhibition or show, such as was originally used to celebrate a victory. The title of Bacon's 37th Essay is 'Of Masques and Triumphs,' and the two words appear to have been synonymous, for the Essay treats of masques alone. In the same way Milton uses the word. See *L'Allegro*, 120:

'Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds of peace, high triumphs hold.'

And *Samson Agonistes*, 1312:

'This day to Dagon is a solemn feast,
With sacrifices, triumph, pomp, and games.'

In his note on the latter passage Warton suggests that Milton 'applied *pomp* in the appropriated sense which it bore to the Grecian festivals, where the *πομπη*, a principal part of the ceremony, was the spectacular procession.' Shakespeare also, in *King John*, iii. 1. 304, has the word with a trace of its original meaning:

'Shall braying trumpets and loud churlish drums,
Clamours of hell, be measures to our pomp?'

20. *duke*, a title which Shakespeare might have found attached to Theseus in Chaucer. See the *Knight's Tale* (*Cant. Tales*, l. 860):

'Whilom as olde stories tellen us,
There was a duk that highte Theseus.'

21. *Egeus*. Shakespeare for his own purposes makes three syllables of this name.

Ib. *what's the news with thee?* What has happened to thee? Compare iii. 2. 272.

27. *This man hath bewitch'd.* The later folios omit 'man.' Theobald reads 'witch'd.'

Ib. bosom, used like 'heart' for the seat of the affections and desires. See *Lear*, v. 3. 49, where 'common bosom' means the affections of the common people:

'To pluck the common bosom on his side.'

32. *stolen the impression of her fantasy*, secretly stamped his image on her imagination.

33. *gawds*, trifling ornaments, toys. See iv. 1. 166; and *Troilus and Cressida*, iii. 3. 176:

'One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.

That all with one consent praise new-born gawds.'

Both 'gawd' and 'jewel' are derived ultimately from the Latin *gaudium*: the latter coming to us immediately from the Old French *joel*, which is itself *gaudiale*.

Ib. conceits, fanciful devices. Cotgrave has 'Gentillesces. Prettie conceits, deuises, knacks, feats, trickes.'

34. *Knacks*, knick-knacks, trinkets. Compare *Winter's Tale*, iv. 4. 360:

'Sooth, when I was young

And handed love as you do, I was wont

To load my she with knacks.'

35. *prevailment*, influence.

Ib. unharden'd, tender, and capable of receiving impressions; inexperienced.

38. *harshness*, unkindness, want of tenderness. Compare *Lear*, ii. 4. 175:

'Thy tender-hefted nature shall not give

Thee o'er to harshness.'

41. Solon's laws gave a father the power of life and death over his child. See Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrhon*. Hypot. iii. 24. But we need not suppose that Shakespeare knew of this.

45. *Immediately provided &c.*, as Steevens has remarked, smacks of an attorney's office.

50. *and within his power* it is &c. For this ellipsis see Abbott § 403.

51. *To leave the figure &c.*, to let the figure remain, or to obliterate it.

54. *in this kind*, in this respect. Compare *As You Like It*, ii. 1. 27:

'And in that kind swears you do more usurp

Than doth your brother that hath banish'd you.'

Ib. wanting your father's voice, as he lacks your father's authority or suffrage in your favour. Compare *All's Well*, ii. 3. 60:

'This youthful parcel

Of noble bachelors stand at my bestowing,

O'er whom both sovereign power and father's voice

I have to use.'

60. *Nor how it may concern my modesty, nor how much it may affect my modesty.*

61. *to plead my thoughts*, to utter my thoughts by way of plea or argument. 'Plead' is in many cases little more than 'speak.'

65. *to die the death*, to die; generally but not uniformly applied to death inflicted by law: for instance, it is apparently an intensive phrase in Sackville's *Induction*, l. 55:

'It taught mee well all earthly things be borne
To dye the death.'

Shakespeare however uses the expression always of a judicial punishment. Compare *Antony and Cleopatra*, iv. 14. 26:

'She hath betray'd me, and shall die the death.'

Even when Cloten says (*Cymbeline*, iv. 2. 96) to Guiderius 'Die the death,' he looks upon himself as the executioner of a judicial sentence in killing an outlaw. See *Matthew* xv. 4.

68. *Know of your youth*, enquire of your youth, ascertain from your youth. So *King Lear*, v. 1. 1:

'Know of the duke if his last purpose hold.'

Twelfth Night, iii. 4. 27S: 'Do me this courteous office, as to know of the knight what my offence to him is.'

Ib. blood, passion as opposed to reason. See below, l. 74, and *Hamlet*, iii. 2. 74:

'Whose blood and judgement are so well commingled.'

69. *Whether*, a monosyllable; as frequently in Shakespeare. See iii. 1. 139; iii. 2. 81. It is sometimes written 'where'; as in *The Tempest*, v. 2. 111, the first folio has 'Where thou bee'st he or no.'

70. *the livery of a nun*. For the word 'nun' applied to a woman in the time of Theseus see North's *Plutarch* (1631), p. 2: 'But Ægeus desiring (as they say) to know how he might haue children, went into the city of Delphes, to the Oracle of Apollo: where, by a Nunne of the temple, this notable prophecie was giuen him for an answer.' 'Livery,' which now denotes the dress of servants, formerly signified any distinctive dress, as in the present passage. Compare *Pericles*, ii. 5. 10:

'One twelve moons more she'll wear Diana's livery.'

Again in the same play, iii. 4. 10:

'A vestal livery will I take me to.'

71. *For aye*, for ever. A. S. *á*, or *aa*, ever, always.

Ib. mew'd, penned up, cooped up. Compare *Richard III*, i. 1. 132:

'More pity that the eagle should be mew'd,
While kites and buzzards prey at liberty.'

From the French *mue*, which Cotgrave defines, 'A Mue, or Coope wherein foule is fattened.'

75. *undergo*, endure. So in *The Tempest*, iii. 1. 3:

'Some kinds of baseness

Are nobly undergone.'

Ib. maiden pilgrimage, a course of life passed in virginity. This sense of 'pilgrimage' is in accordance with the usage of scripture. Compare *Genesis* xlvii. 9: 'The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years.' And see *As You Like It*, iii. 2. 138:

'Some, how brief the life of man

Runs his erring pilgrimage.'

76. *earthlier happy*, more earthly happy, happier in an earthly sense. Pope read 'earlier happy'; Capell, 'earthly happier'; and Steevens proposed 'earthly happy.'

Ib. the rose distill'd. Malone refers to other instances in which Shakespeare has used the same figure. See *Sonnet* v. 13, 14:

'But flowers distill'd, though they with winter meet,

Leese but their show; their substance still lives sweet.'

The next sonnet begins, following up the same idea,

'Then let not winter's ragged hand deface

In thee thy summer, ere thou be distill'd:

Make sweet some vial, &c.'

So. *my virgin patent*, my privilege of virginity and the liberty that belongs to it. Compare *Othello*, iv. 1. 209: 'If you are so fond over her iniquity, give her patent to offend.' The word is derived from the *literæ patentis*, or letters patent, which conveyed the privilege.

81. *lordship*, power, authority; especially used of the authority of a husband, as in *All's Well*, v. 3. 156:

'I wonder, sir, sith wives are monsters to you,

And that you fly them as you swear them lordship,

Yet you desire to marry.'

Ib. whose unwished yoke. So the quartos and first folio. The second folio, to mend the grammar, read 'to whose unwish'd yoke.' But the omission of the preposition in such cases is of common occurrence. Compare *I Henry VI*, iii. 2. 25:

'No way to that, for weakness, which she enter'd';

that is, by which she entered. See also *Much Ado about Nothing*, v. 2. 47:

'Let me go with that I came [for].' In his note on *Cymbeline*, v. 5. 465, Malone quotes *Winter's Tale*, ii. 1. 94:

'Even as bad as those

That vulgars give bold'st titles [to].'

Again, in the same play, ii. 1. 131:

'That the queen is spotless

I' the eyes of heaven and to you; I mean,

In this which you accuse her [of].'

89. *to protest* to profess, promise solemnly to observe. Compare Two Gentlemen of Verona, iv. 2. 7:

‘When I protest true loyalty to her.’

90. *austerity*, severe self-mortification; used technically of the religious discipline of a nun.

92. *erazed tile*, a tile with a flaw in it. Compare Lyly’s Euphues (ed. Arber), p. 58: ‘Yes, yes, Lucilla, well doth he knowe that the glasse once crazed, will with the least clappe be cracked.’

98. *estate*, convey as an estate. In other passages it is used with the preposition ‘on’ or ‘upon.’ See The Tempest, iv. 1. 85:

‘And some donation freely to estate
On the blest lovers.’

And As You Like It, v. 2. 13: ‘All the revenue that was old Sir Rowland’s will I estate upon you.’

99. *derived*, descended. So in Two Gentlemen of Verona, v. 4. 146:

‘Thou art a gentleman and well derived.’

100. *As well possessed*, with as good possessions or property.

102. *If not with vantage*, if I have not even an advantage over him in this respect.

106. *to his head*, before his face, openly and unreservedly. Compare Measure for Measure, iv. 3. 147:

‘He shall bring you
Before the duke, and to the head of Angelo
Accuse him home and home.’

And Much Ado about Nothing, v. 1. 62:

‘Know, Claudio, to thy head,
Thou hast so wrong’d mine innocent child and me.’

110. *spotted*, polluted, guilty; the opposite of ‘spotless.’ Compare Richard II, iii. 2. 134:

‘Terrible hell make war
Upon their spotted souls for this offence!’

And Titus Andronicus, ii. 3. 74:

‘Spotted, detested, and abominable.’

112. *spoke*. See l. 175.

113. *self-affairs*, my own business. Shakespeare has many similar compounds: as ‘self-abuse,’ for self-deception, Macbeth, iii. 4. 142; ‘self-bounty,’ natural goodness or benevolence, Othello, iii. 3. 200; ‘self-breath,’ one’s own breath or words, Troilus and Cressida, ii. 3. 182; ‘self-danger,’ personal risk, Cymbeline, iii. 4. 149; ‘self-wrong,’ injury done to oneself, Comedy of Errors, iii. 2. 168; &c.

120. *extenuate*, mitigate, weaken the force of.

123. *go along*, go with us. So in 3 Henry VI, iv. 5. 25:

'Huntsman, what say'st thou? wilt thou go along?'

125. *nuptial*. The second and later folios read 'nuptials,' in accordance with modern usage. Shakespeare, except in two instances, employs the singular form. See note on *The Tempest*, v. 1. 308. In the same way we have 'funeral' and 'funerals.' Compare Julius Cæsar, v. 3. 105:

'His funerals shall not be in our camp';

although in this case it is the singular form that has survived.

126. *nearly that concerns*, that nearly concerns.

127. *Exeunt &c.* In the quartos and folios the stage direction is 'Exeunt. Manet Lysander and Hermia.' It was a strange oversight on the part of Egeus to leave his daughter with Lysander.

129. *How chance &c.*, how chances it. Compare *King Lear*, ii. 4. 64:

'How chance the king comes with so small a train?'

Abbott, § 37.

130. *Belike*, probably, by likelihood. See Julius Cæsar, iii. 2. 275:

'Belike they had some notice of the people.'

The word is unusual if not singular in form. It is recorded in Nodal and Milner's Lancashire Glossary as still in use.

131. *Beteem them*, allow them. Compare *Hamlet*, i. 2. 141:

'So loving to my mother

That he might not beteem the winds of heaven

Visit her face too roughly.'

In the present passage, as suggested in the notes to *Hamlet*, there is probably a reference to the other meaning of the word 'to pour.' In this sense 'teem' is still used in the North and East of England.

134 &c. Bishop Newton in his edition of Milton called attention to the resemblance between Lysander's complaint and that of Adam in *Paradise Lost*, x. 898-906:

'For either

He never shall find out fit mate, but such
As some misfortune brings him, or mistake;
Or whom he wishes most shall seldom gain
Through her perverseness, but shall see her gain'd
By a far worse; or, if she love, withheld
By parents; or his happiest choice too late
Shall meet, already link'd and wedlock-bound
To a fell adversary, his hate or shame.'

136. *cross*, vexation, trial; from the figurative usage of the word in Scripture. See *Matthew* x. 38; *As You Like It*, v. 4. 137; and below, l. 153.

Ib. low. Theobald's correction. The quartos and folios read 'loue.' In support of the correction Malone refers to a very parallel passage in *Venus and Adonis*, 1136-1140:

'Sorrow on love hereafter shall attend:
It shall be waited on with jealousy,
Find sweet beginning, but unsavoury end,
Ne'er settled equally, but high or low,
That all love's pleasure shall not match his woe.'

137. *misgrafted*, ill grafted. Shakespeare uses both forms 'graff,' Fr. *greffer*, and 'graft.' See *As You Like It*, iii. 2. 124 (106 Clar. Press ed.), and *Richard II*, iii. 4. 101.

139. *friends*. The reading of the quartos. The folios have 'merit.'

141. *sympathy*, congruity, equality. Compare *Richard II*, iv. 1. 33:

'If that thy valour stand on sympathy';

that is, as explained in the note to the Clarendon Press edition, 'If your valour is so punctilious as to insist upon an antagonist of similar rank.' See also *Merry Wives of Windsor*, ii. 1. 7-10, and *Othello*, ii. 1. 232: 'Sympathy in years, manners and beauties.'

143. *momentary*. The reading of the quartos, altered in the folios to 'momentary.' The former seems to have been the earlier form of the word, from Fr. *momentaine*, Lat. *momentaneus*, although both forms were in use in Shakespeare's time. See *Lucrece*, 690. Tyndale's translation of 2 Cor. iv. 17, is, 'For oure excedinge tribulacion which is momentauny (Vulg. *momentaneum*) and light prepareth an excedinge and an eternall waight of glorie vnto vs.'

145. *collied*, black; literally, begrimed as with soot or coal. In Herefordshire 'colly' signifies 'dirty, smutty.' See Sir G. C. Lewis's *Glossary of Provincial Words used in Herefordshire*. 'Collow, or Colly' is in Wilbraham's *Cheshire Glossary*. Palsgrave (*Lesclaircissement de la Langue Francoyse*) gives: 'I colowe, I make blake with a cole. Ie charbonne.' And Cotgrave has, 'Charbonner. To paint, marke, write, or smeare, with a coale; to collowe; to bleach, or make black, with a coale.'

147. *in a spleen*, in a swift, sudden fit, as of passion or caprice. The word is used of swift and violent motion in *King John*, ii. 1. 448:

'With swifter spleen than powder can enforce,
The mouth of passage shall we fling wide ope.'

And again, v. 7. 50:

'O, I am scalded with my violent motion,
And spleen of speed to see your majesty!'

148. Halliwell quotes *Romeo and Juliet*, ii. 2. 119, 120:

'Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be,
Ere one can say "It lightens."'

151. *edict*, with the accent on the last syllable. So in *Love's Labour's Lost*, i. 1. 11:

'Our late edict shall strongly stand in force.'

It occurs also with the accent on the penultimate, in accordance with modern usage. See I Henry IV, iv. 3. 79:

'Some certain edicts and some strait decrees.'

155. *fancy's, love's*. See iv. 1. 162, and compare 'fancy-sick,' iii. 2. 96; 'fancy-free,' ii. 1. 164.

156. *persuasion*, opinion, conviction. Compare Cymbeline, i. 4. 125: 'You are a great deal abused in too bold a persuasion.' It also signifies a persuasive argument, and perhaps has that sense here.

159. *remote*. The reading of the quartos. The folios have 'remov'd,' which is used in the same sense in Hamlet, i. 4. 46.

160. *respects*, regards, considers. See ii. 1. 224, and compare Coriolanus, iii. 1. 307:

'The service of the foot

Being once gangrened, is not then respected

For what before it was.'

164. *forth*, out of. So Coriolanus, i. 4. 23:

'They fear us not but issue forth their city.'

And Romeo and Juliet, i. 1. 126:

'Madam, an hour before the worshipp'd sun

Peer'd forth the golden window of the east.'

167. *To do observance to a morn of May*, to observe the rites of May-day. See iv. 1. 132, and Chaucer, Knight's Tale, 1500:

'And for to doon his observance to May.'

'It was anciently the custom for all ranks of people to go out a Maying early on the first of May. Bourne tells us that in his time, in the villages in the North of England, the juvenile part of both sexes were wont to rise a little after midnight on the morning of that day, and walk to some neighbouring wood, accompanied with music and the blowing of horns, where they broke down branches from the trees and adorned them with nosegays and crowns of flowers. This done, they returned homewards with their booty about the time of sunrise, and made their doors and windows triumph in the flowery spoil.' (Brand's Popular Antiquities, i. 212; Behn's Ant. Lib.) The early rising is referred to in Henry VIII, v. 4. 14, 15:

'Tis as much impossible . . .

To scatter 'em, as 'tis to make 'em sleep

On May-day morning; which will never be.'

As fit, says the clown in All's Well, ii. 2. 25, as 'a morris for May-day.' Traces of this morris-dancing still remain in the villages about Cambridge. The gathering of the whitethorn is described by Herrick in his poem on Corinna's Going a Maying (Hesperides, i. 87, ed. 1846), and scarcely an English poet from Chaucer to Tennyson is without a reference to the simple customs by which our ancestors celebrated the advent of the flowers. May-dew was held of virtue as a cosmetic. Mrs. Pepys would go to

Woolwich for air and to gather May-dew while her husband diverted himself at Vauxhall. For further information see Brand's Popular Antiquities already quoted, and Chambers's Book of Days, i. 570-582.

169. Venus swears by Cupid's bow, Venus and Adonis, 581 :

'Bids him farewell, and look well to her heart,
The which, by Cupid's bow she doth protest,
He carries thence incaged in his breast.'

170. *with the golden head*. Cupid's arrows in the old mythology were tipped either with gold or lead; the former causing, the latter repelling, love. See Ovid, Metam. i. 468-471 :

'Eque sagittifera promisit duo tela pharetra
Diversorum operum: fugat hoc, facit illud amorem.
Quod facit, auratum est et cuspidē fulget acuta;
Quod fugat, obtusum est et habet sub arundine plumbum.'

Compare Twelfth Night, i. 1. 35 :

'How will she love, when the rich golden shaft
Hath kill'd the flock of all affections else
That live in her.'

171. *Venus' doves*, which drew her chariot. See Venus and Adonis, 153, 1190; Lucrece, 58; Romeo and Juliet, ii. 5. 7.

173. See Virgil, Aeneid, iv. 584, &c. Steevens pointed out the anachronism of making Dido and Aeneas earlier in point of time than Theseus. But Shakespeare's Hermia lived in the latter part of the sixteenth century and was contemporary with Nick Bottom the weaver. 'Carthage' as an adjective occurs several times in Marlowe's Tragedy of Dido, as for instance in Act iv. (p. 269, ed. Dyce, 1862) :

'Ye shall no more offend the Carthage queen.'

And again in Beaumont and Fletcher, The Maid's Tragedy, ii. 2 :

'Now, a tear;
And then thou art a piece expressing fully
The Carthage queen, when from a cold sea-rock,
Full with her sorrow, she tied fast her eyes
To the fair Trojan ships.'

174. *Trojan*, the spelling of the quartos and first folio.

175. *broke*, broken. Shakespeare uses both forms. See note on Richard II, iii. 1. 13.

182. *your fair*, your beauty. Compare As You Like It, iii. 2. 99 (84 Clar. Press ed. and note); and Sonnet xvi. 11;

'Neither in inward worth nor outward fair.'

183. *lode-stars*, leading or guiding stars; as the polar star is to sailors. Compare Lucrece, 179 :

'Whereat a waxen torch forthwith he lighteth,
Which must be lode-star to his lustful eye.'

And Chaucer, Knight's Tale, 2059:

'Ther saugh I how woful Calystope,
Whan that Dyane was agrieved with here,
Was turned from a womman to a bere,
And after was sche maad the loode sterre.'

So also in Maundevile's Travels, ed. Halliwell, p. 180: 'In that Lond, ne in many othere bezonde that, no man may see the Sterre transmoutane, that is clept the Sterre of the See, that is unmevable, and that is toward the Northe, that we cleepen the Lode Sterre.' In the alliterative poem *Morte Arthur* (ed. Brock), l. 751, the word occurs in the form 'lade sterne':

'Lukkes to þe lade-sterne, whene þe lyghte faillez.'

It is the 'cynosure' of Milton's *L'Allegro*, So:

'Where perhaps some beauty lies,
The cynosure of neighbouring eyes';

κυνόσουρα being the Greek name for the constellation Ursa Minor, in which is the pole-star.

186. *favour*, outward appearance, aspect; with a play upon the other meaning of the word. Compare *As You Like It*, iv. 3. 87:

'The boy is fair,

Of female favour.'

It is generally applied to the face. See *Macbeth*, i. 5. 73; *Hamlet*, v. 1. 214; and *Twelfth Night*, iii. 4. 363:

'*Ant.* You do mistake me, sir.

First Off. No, sir, no jot; I know your favour well.'

Rosaline in *Love's Labour's Lost* (v. 2. 33) plays upon the word as Helena does here:

'An if my face were but as fair as yours
My favour were as great.'

187. *Fours would I catch*. Hanmer's reading. The quartos and first folio have 'Your words I catch'; the later folios 'Your words I'd catch.' This Staunton approves, remarking, 'Helena would catch not only the beauty of her rival's aspect, and the melody of her tones, but her language also.' But Hanmer's correction gives a better sense.

190. *bated*, excepted. So *The Tempest*, ii. 1. 100: 'Bate, I beseech you, widow Dido.'

191. *translated*, transformed. See iii. 1. 107. Compare *Coriolanus*, ii. 3. 196:

'So his gracious nature
Would think upon you for your voices and
Translate his malice towards you into love.'

And Sonnet xcvi. 10 :

‘How many lambs might the stern wolf betray,
If like a lamb he could his looks translate!’

200. *no fault*. So the first quarto. The second quarto and the folios read ‘none.’

209. *To-morrow night*. There is a discrepancy here in point of time. At the opening of the play there are four days before the new moon.

211. *liquid pearl*. See ii. 1. 15.

Ib. bladed, with fresh green shoots. Compare Macbeth, iv. 1. 55 :

‘Though bladed corn be lodged and trees blown down.’

212. *still*, constantly. See iii. 1. 158 ; The Tempest, i. 2. 229 ; iii. 3. 64 ; and Two Gentlemen, iv. 3. 31 :

‘To keep me from a most unholy match,

Which heaven and fortune still rewards with plagues.’

215. *faint primrose-beds*, on which those rest who are faint and weary. This proleptic use of the adjective is common in Shakespeare. Compare Troilus and Cressida, i. 3. 147 :

‘With him Patroclus

Upon a lazy bed the livelong day

Breaks scurril jests.’

And As You Like It, ii. 7. 132 :

‘Oppress’d with two weak evils, age and hunger.’

216. *sweet*. Theobald’s correction. The quartos and folios read ‘sweld,’ or ‘swell’d,’ which some have defended, although the rhyme is decisive in favour of Theobald’s conjecture. In support of this Heath quotes Psalm lv. 14, ‘We took sweet counsel together,’ which Shakespeare may have had in his mind.

219. *stranger companies*. Another emendation of Theobald’s for ‘strange companions’ which is the reading of the quartos and folios. He justifies the use of ‘stranger’ as an adjective by referring to Richard II, i. 3. 143 :

‘But tread the stranger paths of banishment’ ;

and of ‘companies’ for companions, associates, from Henry V, i. 1. 55 :

‘His companies unletter’d, rude and shallow.’

222. *Keep word*. Compare ‘Keep promise,’ l. 179.

223. *morrow*, to-morrow. As in Romeo and Juliet, ii. 2. 186 :

‘Good night, good night! parting is such sweet sorrow,

That I shall say good night till it be morrow.’

226. *other some*, others. Compare The Two Noble Kinsmen, iv. 3 : ‘Her distraction is more at some time of the moon than at other some, is it not?’ And Measure for Measure, iii. 2. 94 : ‘Some say he is with the Emperor of Russia ; other some, he is in Rome.’ Also 2 Esdras xiii. 13 : ‘Some of them were bound, and other some brought of them that were offered.’ And Acts xvii. 18.

231. *admiring of*. In this construction 'admiring' is a verbal noun, originally governed by a preposition 'in' or 'on,' which has disappeared, but which exists sometimes in the degraded form 'a,' in such words as 'a hunting,' 'a building.' See King Lear, ii. 1. 41: 'mumbling of wicked charms.' Also As You Like It, ii. 4. 44: 'searching of thy wound.'

232. *holding no quantity*, having no proportion to the estimate formed of them. Compare Hamlet, iii. 2. 177:

'For women's fear and love holds quantity.'

233. *transpose*, transform,

239. *beguiled*, deceived. So in Genesis iii. 13: 'The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.'

240. *in game*, in sport or jest. Chaucer (C. T. l. 9468) has 'Bitwix earnest and game'; that is, between earnest and jest.

242. *eyne*, eyes; the Old English plural, which occurs again in ii. 2. 99; iii. 2. 138; v. 1. 178. See also Venus and Adonis, 633:

'Nor thy soft hands, sweet lips and crystal eyne.'

In Shakespeare it is always used on account of the rhyme, except in Lucrece 1229 and Pericles, iii. Gower, 5:

'The cat with eyne of burning coal.'

It occurs in Chaucer in the forms *eien*, *eyen*, or *eizen*, A. S. *eúgan*.

246. *go tell*. See ii. 1. 14. So 'go sleep,' The Tempest, ii. 1. 190; 'go pray,' Hamlet, i. 5. 132. See note on the latter passage for other examples.

249. *it is a dear expense*, it will cost me dear, because it will be in return for my procuring him a sight of my rival.

251. *his sight*, the sight of him.

Scene II.

Enter &c. The first folio has 'Enter Quince the Carpenter, Snug the Ioyner, Bottome the Weauer, Flute the bellowes-mender, Snout the Tinker, and Starueling the Taylor.' Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps thinks that Bottom being a weaver takes his name from a 'bottom' of thread.

2. *You were best*, it were best for you. See note on The Tempest, i. 2. 367: 'Be quick, thou'rt best.'

Ib. generally in Bottom's language means particularly, severally.

3. *the scrip*, or written document. Chaucer (C. T. 9571, ed. Tyrwhitt) uses 'script' in the same sense:

'If I you told of every script and bond.'

The MSS. of the Six-text edition read 'scrit' or 'scrite.' Compare Hol-land's Pliny, vii. 25: 'But herein appeared his true hautinesse of mind indeed, and that unmatchable spirit of his, That when upon the battell at Pharsalia, as wel the cofers and caskets with letters & other writings of

Pompey, as also those of Scipioes before Thapsus, came into his hands, he was most true unto them, & burnt al, without reading one script or scroll.' In Chaucer's *Troilus and Creseyde* (ii. 1130), to which Tyrwhitt in his Glossary refers s. v. *Script*, we find in the edition of 1542 :

'Scripe nor byl

For loue of god, that toucheth such matere

Ne bring me none.'

All the forms are from Lat. *scriptum*, through the Fr. *escript*, or *escrit*.

6, 7. *on his wedding-day at night*. Compare *Romeo and Juliet*, i. 3. 21: 'On Lammas-eve at night shall she be fourteen.'

9, 10. *grow to a point*, so the quartos. The first three folios have 'grow on to a point,' and the fourth 'grow on to appoint.' It is not always quite safe to interpret Bottom, but he seems to mean 'come to the point.'

11. Steevens quotes the title page of *Cambyses*, 'A lamentable Tragedie, mixed full of pleasant Mirth, containing, The Life of Cambises King of Percia, &c. By Thomas Preston.' We might also refer to 'A new Tragicall Comedie of Apius and Virginia . . . By R. B. . . . 1575.'

12. Warton, in his *History of English Poetry* (ed. 1824), iv. 243, mentions that 'in 1562 was licenced "the booke of Perymus and Thesbye," copied perhaps in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*.' He adds, 'I suppose a translation from Ovid's fable of *Pyramus and Thisbe*.'

20. *gallant*. The reading of the quartos. The folios have 'gallantly.'

21. *ask*, require. Compare *Richard II*, ii. 1. 159:

'And for these great affairs do ask some charge.'

And Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*, ii. 14 (p. 85 Clar. Press ed.): 'For as it asketh some knowledge to demand a question not impertinent, so it requireth some sense to make a wish not absurd.'

23. *condole*. Bottom of course blunders, but it is impossible to say what word he intended to employ. Shakespeare only uses 'condole' once besides, and he then puts it into the mouth of *Ancient Pistol*, who in such matters is as little of an authority as Bottom. See *Henry V*, ii. 1. 133: 'Let us condole the knight'; that is, mourn for him. In *Hamlet*, i. 2. 93, 'condolement' signifies the expression of grief:

'To persever

In obstinate condolement.'

23, 24. *To the rest; yet my &c.*, Theobald's reading. The early copies print 'To the rest yet, my &c.', which may be the right punctuation: 'yet' in this unemphatic position being used in the sense of 'however.' Compare *Lord Herbert of Cherbury's Life*, p. 57: 'Before I departed yet I left her with child of a son.' And *Measure for Measure*, iii. 2. 187: 'The duke yet would have dark deeds darkly answered.'

24. *Ercles*. The part of *Hercules* in the old play to which reference is made was like that of *Herod* in the mysteries, one in which the actor could

indulge to the utmost his passion for ranting. Compare Sidney's *Arcadia*, B. i. p. 50 (ed. 1598): 'With the voyce of one that playeth Hercules in a play.' Again in Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit* (p. 23, New Shakspeare Soc. ed.), quoted by Malone: 'The twelue labors of Hercules haue I terribly thundred on the stage.' The verses recited by Bottom may be a quotation from such a play.

25. *to tear a cat in*, to rant violently. Steevens refers to Middleton's *Roaring Girl*, v. 1 (Works, ed. Dyce, ii. 535): 'I am called by those who have seen my valour Tear-cat.' Again, he quotes from the anonymous play *Histriomastix* (reprinted in Simpson's *School of Shakspeare*, ii. 73): 'Sirrah, is this you would rend and tear the cat upon a stage?'

Ib. *to make all split*, used to denote violent action or uproar; originally a sailor's phrase. Farmer quotes Beaumont and Fletcher, *Scornful Lady*, [ii. 3]:

'Two roaring boys of Rome that made all split.'

So also Middleton, *The Roaring Girl*, iv. 2 (Works, ed. Dyce, ii. 518): 'Well, since you'll needs be clapped under hatches, if I sail not with you till all split, hang me up at the mainyard and duck me.' And Beaumont and Fletcher, *The Wild-Goose Chase*, v. 6:

'I love a sea-voyage, and a blustering tempest;
And let all split.'

Again Chapman, *The Widdowes Tears* (Works, iii. 20): 'Her wit I must imploy vpon this businesse to prepare my next encounter, but in such a fashion as shall make all split.' Compare with all this, which it illustrates, Hamlet's advice to the players, iii. 2. 9 &c.: 'O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings.'

39. *a wandering knight*, or knight errant.

41. *let not me play a woman*. Women's parts were commonly played by men or boys till after the Restoration. See note on *As You Like It*, Epilogue, 14, 15.

43. *all one*, all the same, no matter. So *As You Like It*, iii. 5. 133:
'But that's all one; omittance is no quittance.'

44. *you may speak as small*, in as thin and clear a voice. Compare *Merry Wives of Windsor*, i. 1. 49: 'She has brown hair, and speaks small like a woman.' And Chaucer, C. T. 3360:

'He syngeth in his voys gentil and smal.'

45. *An*, if. Printed 'And' in the old copies.

46. *Thisne*, *Thisne*. These words are printed in italic in the old copies, as if they represented a proper name, and so 'Thisne' has been regarded as a blunder of Bottom's for Thisbe. But as he has the name right in the very next line it seems more probable that 'Thisne' signifies 'in this way'; and he then gives a specimen of how he would aggravate his voice. 'Thissen'

is given in Wright's Provincial Dictionary as equivalent to 'in this manner'; and 'thissens' is so used in Norfolk.

54. Theobald has pointed out that the father and mother of Thisbe and the father of Pyramus do not appear in the interlude.

74. *aggravate*. Bottom of course means the very opposite, like Mrs. Quickly in 2 Henry IV, ii. 4. 175: 'I beseech you now, aggravate your cholier.'

75. *roar you*. For this superfluous use of the pronoun see Abbott, § 221.

Ib. an 'twere, as if it were. Compare Troilus and Cressida, i. 2. 189, 'He will weep you, an 'twere a man born in April.'

Ib. sucking dove. Oddly enough Bottom's blunder of 'sucking dove' for 'sucking lamb' has crept into Mrs. Cowden Clarke's Concordance to Shakespeare, where 2 Henry VI, iii. 1. 71 is quoted 'As is the sucking dove or &c.'

78. *as one shall see in a summer's day*. So Henry V, iii. 6. 67: 'I'll assure you, a' uttered as brave words at the bridge as you shall see in a summer's day.' And again in the same play iv. 8. 23.

84. *discharge*, perform. See iv. 2. 8; Coriolanus, iii. 2. 106:

'You have put me now to such a part which never
I shall discharge to the life.'

It appears to have been a technical word belonging to the stage, and occurs in this connexion in The Tempest, ii. 1. 254:

'To perform an act
Whereof what's past is prologue, what to come
In yours and my discharge.'

85. *orange-tawny*, reddish yellow. See iii. 1. 115. Cotgrave (Fr. Dict.) gives, 'Orangé: m. ée: f. Orange-tawny, orange-coloured.'

Ib. purple-in-grain, the dye obtained from the *kermes* (whence Fr. *cramoisi*, and English *crimson*), an insect which attached itself to the leaves of the Kermes oak (*Quercus coccifera*), a tree found in the south of Europe, especially in Spain, and also in India and Persia. Cotgrave (Fr. Dict.) has, 'Migraine: f. . . . Scarlet, or Purple in graine.' An interesting discussion of the etymology of 'grain' in the sense of dye will be found in Marsh's Lectures on the English Language, 66-75.

86. *French-crown-colour*, the colour of the gold coin of that name. There are many equivocal references in Shakespeare to the 'French crown,' which was a name for baldness produced by a certain disease.

85. *I am to entreat you*. See iv. 2. 29.

90. *to con them*, to study them, learn them by heart. See v. 1. 80, and As You Like It, iii. 2. 289. 'Have you not been acquainted with goldsmiths' wives, and conned them out of rings?'

91. *a mile*. In i. 1. 165 it is a league.

94. *properties*, a theatrical term for all the adjuncts of a play except the

scenery and the dresses of the actors. Compare *Merry Wives of Windsor*, iv. 4. 78:

'Go get us properties
And tricking for our fairies.'

97. *obscenely*. Misused by Bottom as by Costard in *Love's Labour's Lost*, iv. 1. 145:

'When it comes so smoothly off, so obscenely, as it were, so fit.'

99. *hold or cut bowstrings*. Capell seems to have hit upon the true explanation of this expression. 'When a party was made at butts, assurance of meeting was given in the words of that phrase: the sense of the person using them being, that he would "hold," or keep promise, or they might "cut his bowstrings," demolish him for an archer.' Keep the appointment, or give up shooting. Malone explains it, 'To meet, *whether bowstrings hold or are cut*, is to meet in all events.' 'To break one's bowstrings' was a phrase denoting the giving up of anything that was in hand. Steevens quotes from *The Ball*, a play by Chapman and Shirley:

'. . . Have you devices to jeer the rest?'

Luc. All the regiment of 'em, or I'll break my bowstrings.'

In this case the bowstrings are the strings of the bow of a musical instrument. For an illustration of Capell's note, see *Much Ado about Nothing*, iii. 2. 11: 'He hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bowstring,' and so disabled him.

ACT II.

Scene I.

In the early copies Puck is called Robin good-fellow. See Preface.

3. *Thorough*. The spelling of the first quarto. The second quarto and the folios have 'Through.' Drayton imitates this passage in his *Nymphidia*, 309-311:

'Thorough Brake, thorough Brier,
Thorough Mucke, thorough Mier,
Thorough Water, thorough Fier!'

7. *moon's*, a disyllable, as 'Earth's' in *The Tempest*, iv. 1. 110:

'Earth's increase, foison plenty.'

Steevens quotes from Spenser, *Fairy Queen*, iii. 1. 15:

'And eke through fear as white as whales bone.'

Compare also iv. 1. 101 of the present play, where the true reading is that of the first quarto:

'Trip we after night's shade.'

The second quarto and the folios read 'the night's,' in which modern editors have followed them; but this disturbs the accent of the verse.

Ib. *sphere*, orbit. See l. 153, and *The Tempest*, ii. 1. 183: 'You would lift the moon out of her sphere.' Also Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (Works ed. Dyce, 1862), p. 83:

'Be it to make the moon drop from her sphere.'

9. *dew*, bedew, water. Compare *Venus and Adonis*, 66:

'Wishing her cheeks were gardens full of flowers,
So they were dew'd with such distilling showers.'

And *Romeo and Juliet*, v. 3. 14:

'Which with sweet water nightly I will dew.'

Ib. *orbs*, the circles in the grass called fairy rings, popularly believed to be caused by the fairies dancing. See line 86, and compare *The Tempest*, v. 1. 37:

'You demi-puppets that

By moonshine do the green sour ringlets make.'

And *Merry Wives of Windsor*, v. 5. 69, 70:

'And nightly, meadow-fairies, look you sing,
Like to the Garter's compass, in a ring.'

10. *her pensioners*, her body-guard. Henry the Eighth and Elizabeth both had such a band of attendants. Compare *Merry Wives of Windsor*, ii. 2. 79; of Mrs. Ford's suitors says Mrs. Quickly, 'and yet there has been earls, nay, which is more, pensioners.' They were young gentlemen of rank and fortune who were selected for their handsome faces and figures. See Osborne's *Traditional Memoirs of Queene Elizabeth* (in *Secret History of the Court of James the First*, i. 55). Tyrwhitt quotes from Holles's *Life of the first Earl of Clare*: 'I have heard the Earl of Clare say, that when he was pensioner to the Queen, he did not know a worse man of the whole band than himself: and that all the world knew he had then an inheritance of £4000 a year.' From the present passage it may be inferred that their dress was splendid. When Queen Elizabeth visited Cambridge in 1564 she was present at a performance of the *Aulularia* of Plautus in the ante-chapel of King's College, on which occasion her gentlemen pensioners kept the stage, holding staff torches in their hands. (Cooper's *Annals of Cambridge*, ii. 193.)

11. *spots*. Compare *Cymbeline*, ii. 2. 38, 39:

'A mole cinque-spotted,
Like the crimson drops
I' the bottom of a cowslip.'

12. *favours*, love-tokens. See iv. 1. 47, and *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. 2. 130:

'Hold, Rosaline, this favour thou shalt wear,
And then the king will court thee for his dear.'

14. *go seek*. See i. 1. 246.

15. *a pearl in every cowslip's ear*. There are numberless allusions to the wearing of jewels in the ear both by men and women, in Shakespeare and in contemporary writers. Compare *Romeo and Juliet*, i. 5. 48:

'It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear.'

Marlowe, Tamburlaine, First Part, i. 1:

'With costly jewels hanging at their ears.'

In Ben Jonson, Every Man in his Humour, iv. 7. Matthew says: 'O yes, I'll pawn this jewel in my ear.' Again, Every Man out of his Humour, Induction:

'Coin new conceits, and hang my richest words
As polish'd jewels in their bounteous ears.'

16. *thou lob*. 'Lob' is equivalent to lubber, lout, and like them is used contemptuously. Other synonyms are given by Cotgrave (Fr. Dict.) s.v. *Lourdau*; which he defines by the following equivalents: 'A sot, dunce, dullard, grotnoll, iobernoll, blockhead; a lowt, lob, luske, boore, clowne, churle, clusterfist; a proud, ignorant, and vnmannerlie swaine.'

17. *elves*, fairies; A. S. *ælf*. The singular occurs in v. 1. 400:
'Every elf and fairy sprite.'

See notes on King Lear, ii. 3. 10, and The Tempest, v. 1. 33.

20. *fell*, fierce; from Old French, *fel*, Italian *fello*, with which *felon* is connected. Compare Othello, v. 2. 362:

'More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea!'

Ib. wrath, wrath, angry. So written for the sake of the rhyme. In Anglo-Saxon *wrath* is both the substantive 'wrath,' and the adjective 'wroth.'

23. *changeling*, usually a child left by the fairies: here, as a fairy is the speaker, it denotes the one taken by them. See Winter's Tale, iii. 3. 122: 'It was told me I should be rich by the fairies. This is some changeling: open't.'

25. *to trace*, to traverse, wander through. So Much Ado about Nothing, iii. 1. 16:

'As we do trace this alley up and down.'

Spenser uses it as equivalent to 'walk, travel.' See Fairy Queen, iv. 8. 34:

'How all the way the Prince on footpace traced.'

And vi. 3. 29:

'Not wont on foote with heavy armes to trace.'

Holt White quotes from Milton, Comus, 423:

'And, like a quivered nymph with arrows keen,
May trace huge forests, and unharboured heaths.'

29. *sheen*, shining, brightness. As in Hamlet, iii. 2. 167:

'And thirty dozen moons with borrow'd sheen.'

Johnson takes it as an adjective, and renders it 'shining, bright, gay'; but Milton, with the passage in his mind, uses it as a substantive. See Comus, 1003:

'But far above, in spangled sheen,
Celestial Cupid her famed son advanced.'

30. *square*, quarrel. Cotgrave (Fr. Dict.) has, 'Rioter. To chide, brabble, scould, brawl: iangle; debate, square, contend, fall out, in words.' Compare Antony and Cleopatra, iii. 13. 41:

'Mine honesty and I begin to square.'

Again, Titus Andronicus, ii. 1. 100:

'And are you such fools

To square for this?'

Hence 'squarer' = quarreler; see *Much Ado about Nothing*, i. 1. 82: 'Is there no young squarer now that will make a voyage with him to the devil?' In his description of the singing in the church at Augsburg, Ascham uses the word 'square' in the sense of jar or discord: 'The præcentor begins the psalm, all the church follows without any square, none behind, none before, but there doth appear one sound of voice and heart amongst them all.' (*Works*, ed. Giles, i. 270.)

Ib. that, so that.

32. *Either*, used as a monosyllable. See ii. 2. 156, *Macbeth*, v. 7. 18, and *Richard III*, iv. 4. 182:

'Either thou wilt die by God's just ordinance.'

So also 'neither,' 'whether,' are frequently metrical monosyllables.

33. *shrewd*, mischievous. See note on *As You Like It*, v. 4. 165 (*Clar. Press* ed.).

Ib. sprite, the spelling of the first quarto, and in consequence of the rhyme the pronunciation of the other copies, although they read 'spirit.' See *Macbeth*, ii. 3. 84:

'As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprites.'

34. *Robin Goodfellow*. See Preface.

35. *That frights*. The later folios read 'fright,' so as to agree with 'skim' &c., that follow. Others rectify the irregularity by reading 'skims,' 'labours,' and so on. But it is not necessary to correct what Shakespeare may very well have written. The first verb 'frights' is of course governed by 'he' which immediately precedes. The others are in agreement with 'you.' We have in English both constructions. For instance in *Exodus* vi. 7: 'And ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.' And in *2 Samuel* v. 2: 'Thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel.'

Ib. villagery, village population, and so peasantry. Johnson defines it as a district of villages, but it denotes rather a collection of villagers than a collection of villages. The first quarto reads 'Villageree'; the other old copies 'villagree' or 'vilagree.' No other instance of the word is recorded.

36. *quern*, a hand-mill. A. S. *cwæorn* or *cwýrn*; Gothic *kwairnus*. Compare Chaucer, *Monkes Tale*, l. 14080 (ed. Tyrwhitt) of Samson:

'But now is he in prison in a cave,

Wheras they made him at the querne grinde.'

Johnson imagined a difficulty. 'The mention of the mill,' he says, 'seems out of place, for she is not now telling the good but the evil he does.' He suggested the transposition of lines 36 and 37, or the reading

'And sometimes make the breathless housewife churn

Skim milk, and bootless labour in the quern.'

But the fairy is enumerating all Robin Goodfellow's pranks, and among them when he was in a good humour the old song makes him say (*Percy's Reliques*, vol. iii.):

'I grind at mill

Their malt up still.'

See the quotation from Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* in the Preface. The only alternative is with Delius to regard 'quern' as equivalent to 'churn' for which there appears to be no authority.

38. *sometime*, sometimes. Compare 'beside' and 'besides'; 'while' and 'whiles'; 'toward' and 'towards'; and see iii. 1. 98; iii. 2. 360.

Ib. barm, yeast; so called in many provincial dialects still: A. S. *beorma*. Cotgrave has, 'Leveton: m. Yeast, or Barme.'

39. *night-wanderers*. Milton had probably this passage in his mind when he described the Will o' the wisp (*Paradise Lost*, ix. 640) which

'Hovering and blazing with delusive light,

Misleads the amazed night wanderer from his way.'

Ib. harm, misfortune. Compare *As You Like It*, iii. 2. So: 'Glad of other men's good, content with my harm.'

40. *Hobgoblin*. So Drayton, *Nymphidia*, 283:

'He meeteth Pucke, which most men call

Hobgoblin, and on him doth fall.'

47. *a gossip's bowl*, originally a christening cup; for a gossip or god-sib was properly a sponsor. Hence, from signifying those who were associated in the festivities of a christening, it came to denote generally those who were accustomed to make merry together. Archbishop Trench mentions that the word retains its original signification among the peasantry of Hampshire. He adds, 'Gossips are, first, the sponsors, brought by the act of a common sponsorship into affinity and near familiarity with one another; secondly, these sponsors, who being thus brought together, allow themselves one with the other in familiar, and then in trivial and idle, talk; thirdly, any who allow themselves in this trivial and idle talk,—called in French "comméragé," from the fact that "commère" has run through exactly the same stages as its English equivalent.' (*English Past and Present*, pp. 204-5, 4th ed.). Warton, in his note on Milton's *L'Allegro*, 100, identifies 'the spicy

nut-brown ale' with the gossip's bowl of Shakespeare. 'The composition was ale, nutmeg, sugar, toast, and roasted crabs or apples. It was called Lambs-wool.' See Breton's *Fantastickes*, January: 'An Apple and a Nutmeg make a Gossips cup.' Compare *Comedy of Errors*, v. 1. 405:

'Go to a gossips' feast, and go with me.'

And *Romeo and Juliet*, iii. 5. 175:

'Utter your gravity o'er a gossip's bowl.'

48. *crab*, crab apple. See *King Lear*, i. 5. 16: 'For though she's as like this as a crab's like an apple, yet I can tell what I can tell.'

50. *dewlap*, spelt 'dewlop' in the quartos and folios, is properly the loose skin which hangs from the throat of cattle. See iv. 1. 121, and *The Tempest*, iii. 3. 45: 'Dewlapp'd like bulls.' Baret (*Alvearie*, s. v.) has: 'the Dewlap of a rudder beast, hanging downe vnder the necke. Palar.'

51. *aunt*, a familiar name for an old woman. Compare 'nuncle' in *King Lear*, i. 4. 117. It is elsewhere used in a bad sense, but not in this passage or in Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, ii. 1; where Justice Overdo in the habit of a fool says, 'Ale for thine aunt, boy.' Mr. Grant White remarks that 'In New England villages good-natured old people are still called "aunt" and "uncle" by the whole community.' In Cornwall, according to Pegge (*Grose's Glossary*), the same usage prevails.

Ib. saddest tale, most grave or serious story. Compare *Merchant of Venice*, ii. 2. 205:

'Like one well studied in a sad ostent

To please his grandam';

where 'sad ostent' means an assumed appearance of gravity. In the present passage 'sad' may possibly be understood in its ordinary sense.

54. *tailor*. Johnson says, 'The custom of crying *tailor* at a sudden fall backwards, I think I remember to have observed. He that slips beside his chair, falls as a tailor squats upon his board.' If this be not the true explanation it is at least the only one which has been proposed.

54-55. *cough . . . laugh*. The old copies for the sake of the rhyme print 'coffe . . . loffe.'

56. *waxen in their mirth*, grow merrier and merrier. Farmer conjectured 'yoxen' or 'yexen,' to hiccup; the latter was adopted by Singer. The old plural 'waxen' probably survived in the country dialects of Shakespeare's time.

Ib. neeze, sneeze; A. S. *niesan*, Germ. *niesen*. Similarly we find the two forms of the same word 'knap' and 'snap'; 'top' and 'stop,' 'cratch' and 'scratch'; 'lightly' and 'slightly'; 'quinsy' and 'squintancy.' In 2 *Kings* iv. 35 the text originally stood, 'And the child neede seven times'; but the word has been altered in modern editions to 'sneezed.' In *Job* xli. 18 however 'neesings' still holds its place. Compare *Homilies* (ed. Griffiths, 1859), p. 227: 'Using these sayings: such as learn, God and St. Nicholas

be my speed; such as neese, God help and St John; to the horse, God and St. Loy save thee.' Palsgrave (*Lesclaircissement de la Langue Francoyse*) has, 'I nese, le esterne.' And Cotgrave gives both forms, 'Esternuer. To neeze, or sneeze.'

58. Johnson on account of the metre would read 'fairy' as a trisyllable. Dr. Abbott, for the same reason, would prolong 'room' (Shakesperian Grammar, § 484). The metre is scarcely mended in either way. Pope read 'make room.' Dyce in his second edition read 'room, now.' Dr. Nicholson suggests 'roomer,' a sea term, which is applied to a ship when going from the wind.

59. In the stage direction as it appears in the quartos and folios Oberon is called 'the King of Fairies,' and Titania 'the Queen.'

61. *Fairies, skip hence.* The old copies have 'Fairy,' which Capell understands of the leading fairy, her gentleman-usher, and therefore considers Theobald's change to 'Fairies' unnecessary. See however l. 144.

67. *pipes of corn, made of oat straw.* Ritson quotes from Chaucer [*House of Fame*, iii. 134]:

'And many a floyte and litling horne,
And pipes made of greene corne.'

Compare Cotgrave, 'Sampongne: f. A bagpipe, or oaten pipe.' And *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. 2. 913:

'When shepherds pipe on oaten straws.'

Also Milton, *Lycidas*, 33:

'Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute,
Temper'd to the oaten flute.'

And *Comus*, 345:

'Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops.'

Ib. versing love, making love in verse.

69. *steppe.* So the first quarto. The second, followed by the folios, reads 'steepe'; and this was apparently in Milton's mind when he wrote *Comus*, 139:

'Ere the blabbing eastern scout,
The nice morn on the Indian steep
From her cabin'd loop-hole peep.'

To the reading 'steppe' it is objected that the word in the sense in which it is applied to the vast plains of Central Asia was not known in Shakespeare's day, but it is dangerous to assert a proposition which may be disproved by a single instance of the contrary. There is certainly no *a priori* reason why the present passage should not furnish that instance, inasmuch as a word of similar origin, 'horde,' was perfectly well known in England at the beginning of the 17th century. On the other hand, too much weight must not be attached to the spelling of the first quarto, for in iii. 2. 85 'sleep' is misprinted 'slippe.'

75. *Glance at*, hint at, indirectly attack. Compare Julius Cæsar, i. 2. 324 :
 'Wherein obscurely

Cæsar's ambition shall be glanced at.'

For the substantive 'glance' in the sense of 'hint, allusion,' see *As You Like It*, ii. 7. 57 :

'The wise man's folly is anatomized

Even by the squandering glances of the fool.'

And Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, i. 7, § 8 (p. 57, ed. Wright) :
 'But when Marcus Philosophus came in, Silenus was gravelled and out of countenance, not knowing where to carp at him ; save at the last he gave a glance at his patience towards his wife.'

78. *Perigenia*. In North's Plutarch she is called Perigouna, the daughter of the famous robber Sinuis, by whom Theseus had a son Menalippus.

79. *Ægle*. Rowe's correction. The quartos and folios have 'Eagles.' In North's Plutarch (ed. 1631), Theseus, p. 9, we read : 'For some say, that Ariadne hung herself for sorrow, when she saw that Theseus had cast her off. Other write, that she was transported by mariners into the Ile of Naxos, where she was married unto Oenarus the priest of Bacchus : and they thinke that Theseus left her because he was in love with another, as by these verses should appeare,

Ægles the Nymph was lou'd of Theseus,

Who was the daughter of Panopeus.'

So. *Antiopa*, according to some, was the name of the Amazon queen, and the mother of Hippolytus. See North's Plutarch, p. 14.

82. *middle summer's spring*, the beginning of midsummer. Stevens quotes 2 Henry IV, iv. 4. 35 :

'As humorous as winter and as sudden

As flaws congealed in the spring of day.'

Also Luke i. 78 : 'Whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us.' Again we find in Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (ii. p. 97) :

'For till I se the daies spring,

I sette slepe nought at a risshe.'

84. *paved fountain*, a fountain with pebbly bottom ; not artificially paved, for a fountain of this kind would scarcely be frequented by fairies. See Milton, *Comus* 119, of the wood-nymphs' dance :

'By dimpled brook and fountain-brim.'

And *Paradise Lost*, i. 783.

85. *in, on*. See below, l. 90, and compare *Venus and Adonis*, 118 :
 'What seest thou in the ground?' And the Lord's Prayer, 'Thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven.'

Ib. beached, formed by a beach, or which serves as a beach. Compare *Timon of Athens*, v. 1. 219 :

'Upon the beached verge of the salt flood.'

For similar instances of adjectives formed from substantives, see 'guiled,' Merchant of Venice, iii. 2. 97; 'disdain'd,' 1 Henry IV, i. 3. 183; 'simple-answer'd,' that is, simple in your answer, furnished with a simple answer, which is the reading of the folios in King Lear, iii. 7. 43; 'the caged cloister,' the cloister which serves as a cage, A Lover's Complaint, 249; 'ravin'd,' for ravenous, Macbeth, iv. 1. 24; 'poysened' for poisonous, Lyly, Euphues (ed. Arber), p. 196; 'Nylus breedeth the precious stone and the poysened serpent.'

Ib. margent, margin. So in A Lover's Complaint, 39:

'Which one by one she in a river threw,
Upon whose weeping margent she was set.'

And Romeo and Juliet, i. 3. 86:

'And what obscured in this fair volume lies
Find written in the margent of his eyes.'

For the form of the word, compare 'aliant' for 'alien,' 'tyrant' from *τίρανος*, and 'vild' which is a corrupt spelling of 'vile.' Milton has the same spelling in Comus, 232:

'By slow Meander's margent green.'

Shakespeare never uses 'margin'; but in The Tempest, iv. 1. 69, he has

'And thy sea-marge, sterile and rocky-hard.'

86. *dance our ringlets*. See above, l. 9.

87. *brawls*, quarrels. Originally a brawl was a French dance, as in Love's Labour's Lost, iii. 1. 9: 'Will you win your love with a French brawl?' And it was a dance of a violent and boisterous character, as appears by the following extract from Cotgrave: 'Bransle: m. A totter, swing, or swidge; a shake, shog, or shocke; a stirring, an uncertaint and inconstant motion; . . . also, a brawle, or daunce, wherein many (men, and women) holding by the hands sometimes in a ring, and otherwhiles at length, moue altogether.' It may be however that there is no etymological connexion between these two words which are the same in form; and 'brawl' in the sense of 'quarrel' may be an imitative word and akin to 'brabble.'

88. *pipng to us in vain*, because we could not dance to them. See Matthew xi. 17: 'We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced.'

89, 90. Compare King Lear, ii. 4. 168, 169:

'Infect her beauty,

You fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the powerful sun.'

91. *Have*. So Rowe corrected the 'Hath' of the quartos and folios, which is attracted into the singular by the preceding 'land.' See note on Hamlet, i. 2. 38.

Ib. pelting, paltry, insignificant. The folios have 'petty.' The two

words occur together in Measure for Measure, ii. 2. 112 : 'Every pelting, petty officer.' Compare Richard II, ii. 1. 60 :

'Like to a tenement or pelting farm.'

And King Lear, ii. 3. 18 :

'Poor pelting villages, sheep-cotes, and mills.'

92. *That they* &c. The plural follows loosely as representing the collection of individual rivers.

Ib. their continents, the banks that contain them, or hold them in. Compare King Lear, iii. 2. 58 :

'Close pent-up gulfs,

Rive your concealing continents, and cry

These dreadful summoners grace.'

And Hamlet, iv. 4. 64 :

'Which is not tomb enough and continent

To hide the slain.'

95. *a beard*. Malone quotes Sonnet xii. 8 :

'And summer's green all girded up in sheaves

Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard.'

97. *fatted*, fattened. Compare Hamlet, ii. 2. 607 :

'I should have fatted all the region kites

With this slave's offal.'

Ib. murrion. So the quartos and folios. Warburton altered it to 'murrain,' the more common spelling. The murrain was a disease among cattle, see Exodus ix. 3, and the murrion or murrain flock is the flock that had died of the cattle plague. For the variety of the spelling compare King Lear, i. 1. 65, where the folios are divided between 'champaigns' and 'champions.'

98. *nine men's morris*. A rustic game, which is still extant in some parts of England, so called from the counters (Fr. *merelles*) with which it is played. It is described by James in the *Variorum Shakespeare* as follows : 'In that part of Warwickshire where Shakspeare was educated, and the neighbouring parts of Northamptonshire, the shepherds and other boys dig up the turf with their knives to represent a sort of imperfect chess-board. It consists of a square, sometimes only a foot diameter, sometimes three or four yards. Within this is another square, every side of which is parallel to the external square ; and these squares are joined by lines drawn from each corner of both squares, and the middle of each line. One party, or player, has wooden pegs, the other stones, which they move in such a manner as to take up each other's men, as they are called, and the area of the inner square is called the pound, in which the men taken up are impounded. These figures are by the country people called *Nine Men's Morris*, or *Merrils* ; and are so called because each party has nine men. These figures are always cut upon the green turf or leys, as they are called, or upon the

grass at the end of ploughed lands, and in rainy seasons never fail to be choked up with mud.' Another variety of the game as described by Alchorne in the *Variorum Shakespeare* corresponds with what I have seen in Suffolk. Three squares, instead of two, are drawn one within the other, and the middle points of the parallel sides are joined by straight lines, leaving the innermost square for the pound. But the corners of the squares are not joined. The corners of the squares and the middle points of the sides are the places where the men may be put, and they move from place to place along the line which joins them. 'A figure is made on the ground by cutting out the turf; and two persons take each nine stones, which they place by turns in the angles, and afterwards move alternately, as at chess or draughts. He who can play three in a straight line may then take off any one of his adversary's, where he pleases, till one, having lost all his men, loses the game.' See also Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes*, iv. 2, § 13.

99. *the quaint mazes in the wanton green.* 'This alludes,' says Steevens, 'to a sport still followed by boys; i. e. what is now called *running the figure of eight*.' But I have seen very much more complicated figures upon village greens, and such as might strictly be called mazes or labyrinths. On St. Catherine's Hill, Winchester, 'near the top of it, on the north-east side, is the form of a labyrinth, impressed upon the turf, which is always kept entire by the courting of the sportive youth through its meanderings. The fabled origin of this Dædalean work is connected with that of the Dulce Domum song.' (Milner, *History of Winchester*, ii. 155.)

101. *human mortals.* Titania speaks as a fairy. Compare what she says below, l. 135 :

'But she, being mortal, of that boy did die.'

Ib. *want, lack,* are without. Compare *The Tempest*, iii. 1. 79:

'At mine unworthiness that dare not offer
What I desire to give, and much less take
What I shall die to want.'

Ib. *their winter here.* 'Their winter' Malone explains by 'those sports with which country people are wont to beguile a winter's evening, at the season of Christmas, which, it appears from the next line, was particularly in our author's contemplation.' For 'here' Theobald proposed and Hammer adopted 'cheer,' perhaps the true reading.

102. *carol,* Christmas carol.

103. *Therefore,* because of our quarrel.

Ib. *the governess of floods.* Compare *Hamlet*, i. 1. 119:

'The moist star

Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands.'

104. *Pale in her anger.* For a similar fancy, compare *Romeo and Juliet*, ii. 2. 4:

' Arise fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief.'

Douce quotes from the Prologue to Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes*:

' And was also in thopposicion
Of Lucina the Moone, moist and pale
That many shoures fro heauen made auaille.'

105. *That*, so that. See iii. 2. 417.

Ib. rheumatic diseases, says Malone, 'signified in Shakespeare's time, not what we now call rheumatism, but distillations from the head, catarrhs, &c.' He quotes from the Sydney Memorials, i. 94, where the health of Sir Henry Sydney is described: 'He hath verie much distempordid divers parts of his bodie; as namelie, his hedde, his stomach, &c. And therby is always subject to distillacions, coughes, and other rumaticke diseases.' It would be more correct to say that the term included all this in addition to what is now understood by it. Cotgrave has 'Rumatique: com. Rhewmaticke; troubled with a Rhewme'; and he defines 'Rume: f. A Rhewme, Catarrhe; Pose, Murre.' The accent is on the first syllable, as in *Venus and Adonis*, 135:

' O'erworn, despised, rheumatic and cold.'

106. *thorough*. See lines 3 &c.

Ib. this distemperature, this disturbance between Oberon and Titania; not the perturbation of the elements. Compare *Pericles*, v. 1. 27:

' Upon what ground is his distemperature?'

where it is used of the disturbance of mind caused by grief. Again, *Romeo and Juliet*, ii. 3. 40:

' Therefore thy earliness doth me assure
Thou art uproused by some distemperature.'

See also *Hamlet*, iii. 2. 312:

' *Guil.* The king, sir,—

Ham. Ay, sir, what of him?

Guil. Is in his retirement marvellous distempered.

Ham. With drink, sir?

Guil. No, my lord, rather with choler.'

109. *Hiems*'. So *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. 2. 901: 'This side is Hiems, Winter.'

Ib. thin and icy crown. The old copies read 'chiune' or 'chin,' which Steevens saw was not the place for a chaplet. Tyrwhitt proposed 'thin,' that is, thin-hair'd; in support of which Steevens quoted *King Lear* [iv. 7. 36]:

' To watch—poor perdu!—

With this thin helm?

And *Richard II* [iii. 2. 112]:

' White-beards have arm'd their thin and hairless scalps
Against thy majesty.'

He might have added Timon of Athens, iv. 3. 144 :

‘Thatch your poor thin roofs
With burthens of the dead.’

112. *childing autumn*, autumn that brings forth the products of the year. See Sonnet xvii. 6, quoted below. Holt White quotes Fairfax's Tasso, xviii. 26 :

‘An hundreth plants beside (euen in his sight)
Childed an hundreth Nymphes, so great, so dight.’

He adds, ‘Childing is an old term in botany, when a small flower grows out of a large one’; and so far his explanation is correct, but he misses the point and falls into error when he says ‘the childing autumn therefore means the autumn which unseasonably produces flowers on those of summer.’ whereas it means the autumn which seasonably produces its own fruits. It is the change of seasons which makes it abnormal.

113. *mazed*, bewildered, thrown into confusion. Compare 1 Henry VI, iv. 2. 47 :

‘A little herd of England's timorous deer,
Mazed with a yelping kennel of French curs.’

114. *By their increase*, by their products or fruits, which formerly distinguished them. Malone quotes Sonnet xvii. 6 :

‘The teeming autumn, big with rich increase,
Bearing the wanton burden of the prime.’

So also Venus and Adonis, 169, 170 :

‘Upon the earth's increase why shouldst thou feed,
Unless the earth with thy increase be fed?’

116. *debate*, quarrel. Compare 2 Henry IV, iv. 4. 2 :

‘Now, lords, if God doth give successful end
To this debate that bleedeth at our doors.’

118. *it lies in you*, it is in your power. So Sonnet ci. 10 :

‘For 't lies in thee
To make him much outlive a gilded tomb.’

121. *henchman*, a page. The word is of uncertain origin. Spelman derives it from *Hengstman*, equi curator. Percy in a note to the Earl of Northumberland's Household Book (p. 432) says, ‘Haunsmen,’ or ‘Hanshmen’ (more frequently written ‘Henchmen’ or ‘Henxmen’) was the old English Name for the Pages, so called from their standing at their Lords Haunch or side. The Earl of Northumberland had three young Gentlemen who attended him in this capacity, and are classed along with his Wards, &c. and next to his own Sons.’ Reed quotes from Lodge's Illustrations (i. 358) a letter from the Earl of Shrewsbury, dated 11 December, 1565, in which he says: ‘Her Highnes hathe of late, wherat some doo moche marvell, dissolved the auncient office of henchemen.’ In his note upon this, Lodge remarks that the henchmen were ‘a certain number of youths, the sons of

gentlemen, who stood or walked near the person of the monarch on all public occasions.' In Sherwood's English-French Dictionary (Cotgrave, 1632), we find, 'A hench-man, or hench-boy. Page d'honneur; qui marche devant quelque Seigneur de grand autorité.'

123. *votaress*, one that had taken vows. Compare Pericles, iv. prologue 4:

'H's woeful queen we leave at Ephesus,
Unto Diana there a votaress.'

So Milton, Comus, 189, uses 'votarist':

'The grey-hooded Even,
Like a sad votarist in palmer's weed.'

124. *spiced*, laden with spices, balmy.

127. *the embarked traders on the flood*, the merchants embarked upon the sea. For this position of the participle see Timon of Athens, iv. 2. 13:

'A dedicated beggar to the air':

and note on Richard II, iii. 2. 8 (Clar. Press ed.). And for 'flood' compare The Merchant of Venice, i. 1. 10:

'Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood.'

131. *Following*,—*her womb* &c. The words placed between dashes are in a parenthesis in the quartos and folios. Steevens adopted Kenrick's worse than unnecessary alteration, 'Following her womb &c.'

138. *intend you stay*. 'To' is frequently omitted in such constructions. See Abbott's Shakespeare Grammar, § 349, and compare The Tempest, iii. 1. 63:

'Than to suffer
The flesh-fly blow my mouth.'

And King Lear, iv. 5. 35:

'I pray, desire her call her wisdom to her.'

140. *round*, a circular dance. So Macbeth, iv. 1. 130:

'I'll charm the air to give a sound,
While you perform your antic round.'

146. *thou shalt not from this grove*, that is, go from this grove. For the use of the preposition and an auxiliary verb without the verb of motion, see Hamlet, ii. 2. 521: 'It shall to the barber's, with your beard.' Abbott, § 405.

147. *injury* has here something of the meaning of insult and not of wrong only. Compare iii. 2. 148, and the adjective 'injurious' in the sense of 'insulting, insolent,' in iii. 2. 195. In the Authorised Version of 1 Timothy i. 13, 'injurious' is the rendering of the Greek *ὀβριστής*.

148 &c. For the supposed reference in this passage to Mary Queen of Scots and Elizabeth, see Preface.

150. *a mermaid*. For the destructive quality of the mermaid's song, compare Comedy of Errors, iii. 2. 45:

'O, train me not, sweet mermaid, with thy note,
To drown me in thy sister's flood of tears.'

And 3 Henry VI, iii. 2. 186:

'I'll drown more sailors than the mermaid shall.'

Cotgrave gives 'Serene: f. A Syren, or Mermaid.'

Ib. on a dolphin's back, like Arion, who charmed the fish with his song and was saved from drowning. See Twelfth Night, i. 2. 15.

151. *breath*, voice; used of singing as in Twelfth Night, ii. 3. 21: 'I had rather than forty shillings I had such a leg, and so sweet a breath to sing, as the fool has.'

152. *civil*, softened and as it were civilized by the refining influence of music. Compare iii. 2. 147, and As You Like It, iii. 2. 136 (116 Clar. Press ed.):

'Tongues I'll hang on every tree,
That shall civil sayings show.'

153. *certain*, here used of an indefinite number, as in The Tempest, v. 1. 55:

'I'll break my staff,
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth.'

156. *the cold moon*, representative of the goddess of chastity.

157. *all arm'd*, not in full armour but with all his usual weapons. 'All' is merely emphatic.

159. *loosed*, let go; an archery term. Compare Henry V, i. 2. 207:

'As many arrows, loosed several ways,
Come to one mark.'

160. *As*, as if. So Hamlet, iv. 7. 88:

'As had he been incorp'd and demi-natured
With the brave beast.'

161. *might*, could, was able. So King John, ii. 1. 325:

'Heralds, from off our towers we might behold,
From first to last, the onset and retire
Of both your armies.'

162. *votaress*, having taken the vow of chastity. See l. 123.

164. *fancy-free*, free from the power of love. See i. 1. 155.

167. Shakespeare may have taken the idea of the change of colour in the flower from the change of the mulberry in the story of Pyramus and Thisbe as told by Ovid.

168. *love-in-idleness* is one of the names given to the pansy or heartsease in Lyte's Herball (1595): 'in English Pances, Loue in Idleness, and Harts ease.' Toller says it was in use in his time in Warwickshire. Gerard (Herball, p. 705, ed. 1597) calls the flower 'Harts ease, Pansies, Live in Idleness, Cull me to you, and three faces in one hood.'

171. *or . . . or, either . . . or.* Compare *The Tempest*, i. 2. 249:
 'Without or grudge or grumblings.'

As *You Like It*, i. 2. 272:

'Or Charles or something weaker masters thee.'

174. *the leviathan.* The margins of the Bibles in Shakespeare's day explained leviathan as a whale, and so no doubt he thought it.

175. To 'put a girdle round about the earth' was a common expression for making a voyage round the world. It occurs, as Steevens points out, in Chapman's *Bussy D'Ambois*, which was first printed in 1607 (*Works*, ii. 6), 'To put a Girdle round about the world.' See also Dekker, *If this be not a good play, the devil is in it* (*Works*, iii. 277, ed. 1873):

'About the world

My trauailes make a girdle (perfect round:).'

Staunton quotes from *Shirley's Humorous Courtier*, i. 1:

'Thou hast been a traveller, and convers'd
 With the Antipodes, almost put a girdle
 About the world.'

182. *the soul of love*, the most intense and passionate love. Compare *1 Henry IV*, iv. 1. 50:

'The very bottom and the soul of hope.'

And *Troilus and Cressida*, iii. 2. 141:

'See, see, your silence,
 Cunning in dumbness, from my weakness draws
 My very soul of counsel.'

190. *slay . . . slayeth.* So Theobald, adopting Thirlby's conjecture, corrected the 'stay . . . stayeth' of the quartos and folios. If any justification were required it would be found in iii. 2. 60, 64.

192. *wōod*, mad, raging; A. S. *wōd*; Sc. *wod* or *wud*. Compare *Venus and Adonis*, 740:

'Life-poisoning pestilence and frenzies wood.'

1 Henry VI, iv. 7. 33:

'How the young whelp of Talbot's, raging wood,
 Did flesh his puny sword in Frenchmen's blood!'

The first quarto reads 'wodde.' Compare also Chaucer, *C. T.* 636 (ed. Tyrwhitt):

'Than wolde he speke and crie as he were wood';

and 1659:

'Thou mightest wenen, that this Palamon
 In his fighting were as a wood leon.'

195. *adamant*, loadstone. Compare *Troilus and Cressida*, iii. 2. 186:

'As true as steel, as plantage to the moon,
 As sun to day, as turtle to her mate,
 As iron to adamant, as earth to the centre.'

197. *leave*, give up. See King John, v. 7. 86:

'With purpose presently to leave this war.'

I Henry VI, iv. 1. 108:

'Will not this malice, Somerset, be left?'

201. *nor I cannot*. For the double negative see Venus and Adonis, 113:

'O, be not proud, nor brag not of thy might.'

And 409:

'I know not love, quoth he, nor will not know it.'

208. *worser*. So Hamlet, iii. 4. 157:

'O, throw away the worser part of it.'

210. *use*. See the quartos. The folios have 'do,' and Reed combined the readings into 'do use.'

214. *impeach*, bring into question, expose to reproach. Compare Merchant of Venice, iii. 2. 280:

'And doth impeach the freedom of the state,
If they deny him justice.'

Again, iii. 3. 29:

'If it be denied,
Will much impeach the justice of his state.'

220. *Your virtue is my privilege: for that* &c. Your virtue is my protection, because it is not &c. This is the reading of the early copies. Malone, following Tyrwhitt's conjecture, read

'Your virtue is my privilege for that.
It is not night &c.

That is, Your virtue is my protection or warrant against such wrong. For 'privilege' in this sense see Two Gentlemen of Verona, iii. 1. 160:

'And think my patience, more than thy desert,
Is privilege for thy departure hence.'

221-4. Johnson points out the resemblance to the lines of Tibullus [iv. 13. 11, 12]:

'Tu nocte vel atra
Lumen, et in solis tu mihi turba locis.'

223-6. Malone compares 2 Henry VI, iii. 2. 360-362:

'A wilderness is populous enough,
So Suffolk had thy heavenly company:
For where thou art, there is the world itself.'

224. *in my respect*, in my regard or estimation. Compare Cymbeline, ii. 3. 140:

'His meanest garment,
That ever hath but clipp'd his body, is dearer
In my respect than all the hairs above thee,
Were they all made such men.'

227. *in the brakes*, in the thickets. See iii. I. 4, 77, 110; iii. 2. 15; and Venus and Adonis, 876:

'Hasting to feed her fawn hid in some brake.'

231. *Apollo flies* &c. See Ovid, *Metam.* i. 452 &c.

Ib. holds the chase, pursues.

232. *the griffin*, a fabulous creature, half beast, half bird of prey; now, like the unicorn, only known in the zoology of heraldry. It occurs again in I Henry IV, iii. 1. 152:

'A clip-wing'd griffin, and a moulten raven.'

And in the form 'gripe' in Lucrece, 543:

'Like a white hind under the gripe's sharp claws.'

Baret in his *Alvearie* gives, 'a Griffon, or gripe. Gryps.' See also Holland's Pliny, vii. 2 (vol. i. p. 154): 'Griffons, a kind of wild beasts that flie.' And again x. 49: 'As for the foules called Pegasi, headed like horses; and the Griffons, which are supposed to have long eares, and a hooked bill, I take them to bee meere fables.'

233. *bootless*, profitless, worthless: from A. S. *bót*, profit, advantage. See *The Tempest*, i. 2. 35.

236. *I will not stay thy questions*, I will not wait to talk with thee. For 'question' in the sense of conversation see *As You Like It*, iii. 4. 39: 'I met the duke yesterday and had much question with him.' And *Merchant of Venice*, iv. 1. 346: 'I'll stay no longer question.' Steevens in the present passage conjectured 'question' in the singular, but the plural may denote Helena's repeated efforts at inducing Demetrius to talk with her.

244. *upon the hand*. 'Upon' occurs in a temporal sense in some phrases, where it is used with the cause of anything. In such cases the consequence follows 'upon' the cause. For instance, in *Much Ado about Nothing*, iv. 1. 225:

'When he shall hear she died upon his words.'

Again, in the same play, iv. 2. 65: 'And upon the grief of this suddenly died.' Also 'on' is used in a local sense with the instrument of an action. See below, ii. 2. 107:

'O, how fit a word

Is that vile name to perish on my sword!'

And *Julius Cæsar*, v. 1. 58:

'I was not born to die on Brutus' sword.'

Hence metaphorically it occurs in *King Lear*, ii. 4. 34:

'On whose contents,

They summon'd up their meiny, straight took horse.'

None of these instances are strictly parallel to the one before us, but they shew how 'upon the hand' comes to be nearly equivalent to 'by the hand,' while with this is combined the idea of local nearness to the beloved object

which is contained in the ordinary meaning of 'upon.' A better example is found in Fletcher's Chances, i. 9:

'Give me dying,
As dying ought to be, upon mine enemy,
Parting with mankind by a man that's manly.'

249. *where*, pronounced as a disyllable. See note on 'year' which is so used in *The Tempest*, i. 2. 53. Pope altered it to 'whereon,' to fill up the line.

250. *oxlips*. 'The Oxelip, or the small kind of white Mulleyn, is very like to the Cowslip aforesaid, sauing that his leaues be greater and larger, and his floures be of a pale or faint yelow colour, almost white and without sauour.' Lyte's Herball (1595), p. 134. The second quarto reads 'oxslips'; and 'Oxeslips' is a name of the plant given by Gerarde.

Ib. *the nodding violet*. Compare Drayton, *Quest of Cynthia*, 54:

'I ask'd a nodding violet why
It sadly hung the head.'

Ib. *grows*, attracted into the singular by the nearer subject 'violet.'

251. *luscious*, sweet scented; generally sweet to the taste. Compare Drayton, *Polyolbion*, xv. 153:

'The azur'd Hare-bell next, with them, they neatly mixt:

T' allay whose lushious smell, they Woodbind plac't betwixt.'

On account of the metre, Theobald conjectured 'lush,' luxuriant, thick-growing, which occurs in *The Tempest*, ii. 1. 52: 'How lush and lusty the grass looks!'

Ib. *woodbine*. In Lyte's Herball is a chapter (iii. 51) 'Of Woodbine or Honisuckle,' and it is said 'This herbe or kinde of Bindeweede is called . . . in English Honisuckle, or Woodbine, and of some Caprifole.' So also in Gerarde the woodbine and honeysuckle are identified, and bindweed is a different plant, but Shakespeare elsewhere (iv. 1. 47) makes woodbine and honeysuckle distinct, and apparently regards the former as the same as the convolvulus or bindweed. In the same way Milton (*L'Allegro*, 47, 48) mentions the sweetbriar and the eglantine as different plants.

252. *musk-roses*. Of the different kinds of roses, says Lyte (Herball, p. 760), 'The sixt is named of Plinie in Latine, Rosa Coroneola, of the writers at this day Rosa sera, and Rosa autumnalis; in French, *Rose Musquée*, and *Roses de Damas*: in base Almaigne, Musket Rooskens: in English also, Muske Roses, bicause of their pleasant sent.' So Milton, *Lycidas*, 146:

'The glowing violet,

The musk-rose, and the well attir'd woodbine.'

Except in fairy land these flowers would not be found all at the same season.

Ib. *eglantine*, the sweet briar. See *Cymbeline*, iv. 2. 223:

'No, nor

The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,
Outsweeten'd not thy breath.'

Continuing his description of the kinds of roses, Lyte (Herball, p. 760) says, 'The last is called of Plinie in Greeke *λυχνίς*, Lychnis; in Latine, Rosa Græca: in French, and base Almaigne, Eglantier: in English, Eglantine.'

253. *sometime*. In some editions the words are separated, but the accent shows that they should be combined.

254. *throws*, throws off, sheds.

Ib. snake, like A. S. *snaece*, is feminine, as in Macbeth, iii. 2. 13:

'We have scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it:
She'll close and be herself.'

256. *Weed*, dress, garment; A. S. *wæd*. Compare Lucrece, 196:

'Let fair humanity abhor the deed
That spots and stains love's modest snow-white weed.'

257. *streak*, stroke, touch gently.

263, 264. Steevens appealed to the rhyme between 'man' and 'on' to shew that the broad Scotch pronunciation once prevailed in England. In an earlier part of the scene 'crab' rhymes to 'bob' and 'cough' to 'laugh'; but from such imperfect rhymes, of which other examples occur in iii. 1. 348, 9, iii. 2. 411, 412, 462, 463, and v. 1. 267, 268, it is unsafe to draw any inference as to Shakespeare's pronunciation.

266. *fond*, doting. For the construction with 'on,' which Rowe changed to 'of,' compare Sonnet lxxxiv. 14:

'Being fond on praise, which makes your praises worse.'

Scene II.

1. *a roundel*, like 'round,' and 'roundelay,' signifies both a circular dance, and a part song or catch. In the present passage it has apparently the former meaning, as in Ben Jonson's Tale of a Tub [ii. 1], quoted by Tyrwhitt:

'You'd have your daughter and maids
Dance o'er the fields like faies to church this frost.
I'll have no rondels, I, in the queen's paths.'

In the other sense it is of frequent occurrence; as for instance in Chaucer's Legend of Good Women, 423:

'And many an himpne for your holy daies,
That highliten balades, rondels, virelaies.'

And Spenser, Shepherd's Calendar, August, 126:

'*Wil.* Now endeth our roundelay.
Cud. Sicker, sike a roundle never heard I none.'

The passage quoted by Steevens from Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie* is nothing to the purpose, for the 'roundell' of Puttenham is merely a circle, one of the many fanciful figures described by him in which a poem might be written. In the sense of a circular dancing place it is used by Browne, *Britannia's Pastorals*, book i, song 3, l. 373:

'Thus went they on, and Remond did discusse
Their cause of meeting, till they won with pacing
The circuit chosen for the Maidens tracing.
It was a Roundell seated on a plaine.'

And in the same poem, song 4, l. 279, 'roundelay' is a circular dance:

'In airie ranks
Tread Roundelays vpon the siluer sands.'

2. *the third part of a minute*. The fairy divisions of time are small in proportion to their own tiny dimensions.

3. *musk-rose*. See ii. 1. 252.

4. *Some war* &c. Delius says the construction is 'Some to war' &c. as in the previous line; but it seems rather that 'war' is imperative, 'let some war' &c.

Ib. rere-mice, bats; A. S. *hrere-mús*, from *hreran* to stir, agitate, and so equivalent to the old name 'flittermouse.' The old copies spell the word 'Reremise.' Cotgrave has, 'Chauvesouris: m. A Batt, Flittermouse, Reremouse.' The word occurs in the Wiclifite Versions of Lev. xi. 19, and the plural in the form 'reremees' or 'rere myis' is found in Isa. ii. 20, where the later version has 'backis ether rere myis.'

7. *quaint*, fine, delicate. So Prospero in *The Tempest*, i. 2. 317, exclaims, 'My quaint Ariel!' The word is derived from the Latin *cognitus*, which in Old French became *coint*. Cotgrave (*Fr. Dict.*) gives 'Coint . . . Quaint, compt, neat, fine, spruce, brisk, smirke, smug, daintie, trim, tricked vp.'

Ib. Sing me now asleep. Compare *The Tempest*, ii. 1. 189: 'Will you laugh me now asleep, for I am very heavy?'

9. *double*, forked, cloven. Compare iii. 2. 72, and *Richard II*, iii. 2. 21:

'A lurking adder,
Whose double tongue may with a mortal touch
Throw death upon thy sovereign's enemies.'

Also *The Tempest*, ii. 2. 13:

'Adders who with cloven tongues
Do hiss me into madness.'

11. *Newts*, lizards. See *King Lear*, iii. 4. 135. 'A newt' is an evet or eft (A. S. *efete*), the 'n' of the article having become attached to the following word as in 'nonce,' 'noumpere'=umpire, and others. In 'adder' the opposite process has taken place, and 'a nadder' (A. S. *næddre*) has become 'an adder'; so 'an auger' is really 'a nauger' (A. S. *nafegir*).

Ib. blind-worms, also called slow-worms, are used in the witches' caldron in Macbeth, iv. 1. 16:

'Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting.'

13. *Philomel*, or Philomela, the daughter of Pandion, was transformed into a nightingale and lamented her sad fate in the plaintive notes of the bird which bears her name. Compare Lucrece, 1079:

'By this, lamenting Philomel had ended

The well-tuned warble of her nightly sorrow.'

Her story is told in Ovid, *Metam.* vi.

21. *spinners*. Compare Mercutio's description of Queen Mab, Romeo and Juliet, i. 4. 59:

'Her waggon-spokes made of long spinners' legs.'

25-26. These lines in the early editions are printed as part of the fairies' song.

28. *true-love*, possibly a corruption. In Icelandic *trú-lofa* is to betroth.

30. *ounce*; *Felis uncia*, an animal resembling the leopard, but much smaller.

Ib. cat must here be the wild cat.

31. *Pard*, panther or leopard. See notes on *As You Like It*, ii. 7. 150, and *The Tempest*, iv. 1. 257.

36. *troth*, truth. Compare *Coriolanus*, iv. 5. 198: 'He was too hard for him directly, to say the troth on't.' And *Cymbeline*, v. 5. 274:

'Now fear is from me, I'll speak troth.'

42. *one troth*, one faith or trust, pledged to each other in betrothal. Compare *Cymbeline*, i. 1. 96:

'I will remain

The loyal'st husband that did e'er plight troth.'

49. *interchained*. So the quartos. The folios have 'interchanged.'

45. *take the sense, sweet, of my innocence*, understand my innocent meaning.

46. *takes the meaning*, understands it aright, takes the true meaning.

'Take' is opposed to 'mistake' in v. 1. 90.

54. *beshrew* is used in asseverations to give emphasis, or as here for a mild oath, a 'mischief on,' 'evil befall.' See v. 1. 279, and compare Sonnet cxxxiii. 1:

'Beshrew that heart that makes my heart to groan!'

'Shrew' is used in the same way in *Winter's Tale*, i. 2. 281: 'Shrew my heart.' See note on 'shrewd' in *As You Like It*, v. 4. 165. In the early copies of *Hamlet* (ii. 1. 113) it is spelt 'beshrow,' which no doubt represents the pronunciation of the word.

Ib. my manners, here, my ill manners or want of manners.

57. *human*. The quartos and early folios have 'humane,' but the meaning is the same.

68. *approve*, prove, test, try. Compare *Winter's Tale*, iv. 2. 31: 'Kings

are no less unhappy, their issue not being gracious, than they are in losing them, when they have approved their virtues.' And t Henry IV, iv. 1. 9 :

'Nay, task me to my word; approve me, lord.'

57-60. in *human modesty* . . . *distant*. The sense is clear though the syntax is imperfect. Delius connects 'as may well be said' with 'in human modesty,' but the construction is rather 'in human modesty (let there be) such separation &c.,' and 'So far be distant' is merely a repetition of the same thing.

71. *Weeds*. See ii. 1. 256.

75. *dank*, damp, wet. Compare Romeo and Juliet, ii. 3. 6 :

'Now, ere the sun advance his burning eye,

The day to cheer and night's dank dew to dry.'

77. To mend the metre Theobald read 'Near to this kill-courtesie.' Steevens omits only the second 'this.' Malone, reading 'Near' as a disyllable, makes a line of ten syllables.

78. *Churl*, a peasant, boor (A. S. *ceorl*) ; and hence one of rough and rude manners.

79. *owe*, own, possess. Compare The Tempest, i. 2. 407 :

'This is no mortal business, nor no sound

That the earth owes.'

86. *darkling*, in the dark. See King Lear, i. 4. 237 : 'So, out went the candle and we were left darkling.' And Antony and Cleopatra, iv. 15. 10 :

'O sun,

Burn the great sphere thou movest in! darkling stand

The varying shore of the world.'

Milton borrowed the word in Paradise Lost, iii. 39 :

'As the wakeful bird

Sings darkling, and in shadiest covert hid

Tunes her nocturnal note.'

88. *fond*, foolish, with perhaps something of the other meaning which the word now has. See ii. 1. 266.

89. *my grace*, the favour I obtain.

97. *as a monster*, in apposition to 'my presence.'

99. *sphery*, starlike. 'Sphere' is used by Shakespeare to denote first the orbit in which a star moves, and then the star itself. Compare A Lover's Complaint, 23 :

'As they did battery to the spheres intend.'

Ib. eyne. See i. 1. 242.

104. *Nature shows art*. The quartos read 'Nature shewes art'; the first folio 'Nature her shewes art' which was altered in the later folios to 'Nature here shewes art,' and by Malone to 'Nature shews her art.'

109. *what though?* what then? what matters it? See note on As You Like It, iii. 3. 41 (Clar. Press ed.).

118. *ripe not*, grow not ripe, ripen not. So in *As You Like It*, ii. 7. 26:
 'And so from hour to hour we ripe and ripe.'

119. *touching now the point of human skill*, having reached the height of discernment possible to man.

120. My will, or desire, is guided by reason.

122. *love's richest book*. Compare the description of the County Paris in *Romeo and Juliet*, i. 3. 86:

'And what obscured in this fair volume lies
 Find written in the margent of his eyes.'

128. *flout*, mock. See iii. 2. 327, and *Macbeth*, i. 2. 49:

'Where the Norweyan banners flout the sky
 And fan our people cold.'

Compare *Coriolanus* ii. 3. 168:

'*Third Cit.*

Certainly

He flouted us downright.

First Cit. No, 'tis his kind of speech: he did not mock us.'

129. *troth*. See above, l. 36.

Ib. *good sooth*, in honest truth (A. S. *sóð*). Compare *Merchant of Venice*, ii. 6. 42:

'They in themselves, good sooth, are too too light.'

The full phrase is 'in good sooth,' as in *As You Like It*, iii. 2. 410: 'But, in good sooth, are you he that hangs the verses on the trees, wherein Rosalind is so admired?'

150. *prey*, here used for the act of preying, as in *Macbeth*, iii. 2. 53:

'Good things of day begin to droop and drowse;

Whiles night's black agents to their preys do rouse.'

153. *an if*=if, as in *The Tempest*, v. 1. 117:

'This must crave,

An if this be at all, a most strange story.'

The quartos and folios read 'and if' as usual.

154. *of all loves!* by everything that is loving I entreat you. See *Merry Wives of Windsor*, ii. 2. 119: 'But Mistress Page would desire you to send her your little page, of all loves.' In *Othello*, iii. 1. 13, where the folios read 'for loues sake,' the quarto has 'of all loves.'

Id. *swoon*. Spelt 'swoune' in the earliest quarto; 'sound' in the first folio, and 'swound' in the rest.

156. *Either*, a monosyllable. See ii. 1. 32.

ACT III.

Scene I.

2. *Pat, pat*, just, exactly. Compare King Lear, i. 2. 146: 'And pat he comes like the catastrophe of the old comedy.'

Id. marvellous. The first quarto reads 'marvailles,' as in iv. 1. 23, probably to represent the vulgar pronunciation. In the same manner 'wonders' is found for 'wondrous' in More's Utopia (ed. Arber), p. 136: 'And when they haue gotten it, they be wonders glad thereof.' Again, p. 141: 'Engines for warre they deuysed and inuent wonders wittelye.'

4. *hawthorn brake*, thicket of hawthorns. See ii. 1. 227, and compare Milton, Comus, 147:

'Run to your shrouds within these brakes and trees.'

Ib. our tiring-house, or dressing room.

7. *bully*, a term of familiarity addressed by his companions to a jolly blustering fellow. So the Host to Falstaff, in Merry Wives of Windsor, i. 3. 6: 'Discard, bully Hercules; cashier.' Again, l. 11; 'Said I well, bully Hector?' It occurs besides only in Henry V, and probably was a slang word which had come into use not long before 1600. Florio (Ital. Dict.) gives, 'Bullo, a swaggerer, a swash-buckler.'

12. *By'r lakin*, by our ladykin, or little lady. The same abbreviation is found in The Tempest, iii. 3. 1:

'By'r lakin, I can go no further, sir.'

It occurs in a fuller form in Skelton's Magnifycence, l. 1830 (i. 285):

'By our lakyn, syr, I haue ben a hawkyng for the wyld swan.'

In the first quarto it is spelt 'Berlakin': in the second and in the folios 'Berlaken.'

Ib. parlous, perilous, dangerous. See As You Like It, iii. 2. 45: 'Thou art in a parlous state, shepherd.'

13. *when all is done*, after all. So Much Ado about Nothing, ii. 3. 63; Twelfth Night, ii. 3. 31: 'Excellent! why, this is the best fooling, when all is done.' And Macbeth, iii. 4. 67:

'When all's done,

You look but on a stool.'

15. *Not a whit*. As has been remarked in the note to As You Like It, iii. 2. 42 (Clar. Press ed.), this is a redundant expression, since 'not' itself is a contraction of *nāwicht* or *nawhit*.

16. *seem to say*. Compare Launcelot's language in The Merchant of Venice, ii. 4. 11: 'An it shall please you to break up this, it shall seem to signify.'

18. *more better*. This double comparative was common in Shakespeare's

time, and is suitable to Bottom as being rather exaggerated language, and not because it was thought ungrammatical. Compare the *Tempest*, i. 2. 19,

‘Nor that I am more better

Than Prospero.’

22. *in eight and six*, that is, in alternate verses of eight and six syllables each; the common ballad metre.

25. *afeard*, afraid: though here used as a provincialism appropriate to rustics, the word was otherwise in good use. Compare *The Merchant of Venice*, ii. 7. 29:

‘And yet to be afeard of my deserving

Were but a weak disabling of myself.’

26. *I promise you*, I assure you. See line 179, and *The Merchant of Venice*, iii. 5. 3: ‘Therefore, I promise ye, I fear you.’

27. *you ought to consider with yourselves*. In the folios there is only a comma instead of a colon here, and the construction in this case is ‘you ought to consider with yourselves (that) to bring in &c.’

28. It appears from a pamphlet quoted by Malone in his note on this passage (reprinted in *Somers’ Tracts*, ii. 179) that at the christening of Prince Henry, the eldest son of James I, in 1594, a triumphal chariot was brought in while the King and Queen were at dinner, drawn by ‘a black-moor.’ ‘This chariot, which should have been drawne in by a lyon, (but because his presence might have brought some feare to the nearest, or that the sight of the lights and torches might have commoved his tameness) it was thought meete that the Moor should supply that room.’

35. *defect*, for ‘effect.’ Bottom’s blunders are generally very intelligible.

39. *it were pity of my life*, it were a sad thing for my life, that is, for me. See v. I. 221. It would seem that in this expression ‘of my life’ is either all but superfluous or else a separate exclamation, as in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, i. I. 40: ‘Ha! o’ my life, if I were young again, this sword should end it.’ The phrase occurs again in *Measure for Measure*, ii. I. 77: ‘It is pity of her life, for it is a naughty house.’ And in the same play, ii. 3. 42, compare ‘’Tis pity of him,’ = it is a sad thing for him.

41. Malone quotes from a collection of stories [made by Sir Nicholas L’Estrange, according to a note of Sir F. Madden’s] entitled *Merry Passages and Jeasts* (MS. Harl. 6395, fol. 36b); ‘There was a spectacle presented to Q: Elizabeth vpon the water, and amongst others, Harr. Golding: was to represent Arion vpon the Dolphin’s backe, but finding his voice to be very hoarse and vnpleasant when he came to performe it, he teares of his Disguise, and swears he was none of Arion not he, but eene honest Har. Goldingham; which blunt discoverie pleasd the Queene better, then if it had gone thorough in the right way; yet he could order his voice to an instrument exceeding well.’ The reader of *Kenilworth* will remember that Scott has transferred this story to ‘honest Mike Lambourne.’

53. *lanthorn*. This spelling is purposely left on account of the joke in v. 1. 231: 'This lanthorn doth the horned moon present.'

60. *present*, act the part of. See iii. 2. 14, and *The Tempest*, iv. 1. 167: 'When I presented Ceres.'

65. *every mother's son*. See i. 2. 80.

67. *brake*. See l. 4.

Ib. cue, a player's word; from Fr. *queue*, a tail. It technically denotes the last words of a speech which give the next speaker the hint when to begin. Hence it signifies generally the part an actor has to perform. See *Othello*, i. 2. 83:

'Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it,
Without a prompter.'

70. *a play toward*, or ready to be acted. Compare *As You Like It*, v. 4. 35: 'There is, sure, another flood toward, and these couples are coming to the ark.'

73. *odious*. The same blunder reversed is put into Dogberry's mouth in *Much Ado about Nothing*, iii. 5. 18: 'Comparisons are odorous.'

76. *awhile*. Theobald reads 'a whit' to rhyme with 'sweet.' Malone supposes two lines to be lost, one rhyming with 'sweet,' the other with 'a while.'

84. *juvenal*. See *Love's Labour's Lost*, i. 2. 8: 'How canst thou part sadness and melancholy, my tender juvenal?' The word was affectedly used and appears to have been designedly ridiculed by Shakespeare.

92. Malone proposed to print the line thus:

'If I were, fair Thisby, I were only thine.'

97. To make up the line Johnson proposed to read 'Through bog, through mire &c. '; Ritson, 'Through bog, through burn &c.'

98. *Sometime*, sometimes. See *King Lear*, ii. 3. 19:

'Sometime with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers.'

100. The folios here insert the stage direction, 'Enter Piramus with the Ass's head,' which the quartos omit.

105. Johnson proposed to add to Snout's speech, 'An ass's head?' in order to give point to what Bottom says.

106. *you see an ass-head of your own*. Bottom indulges in what appears to have been a piece of familiar banter of the time, without knowing how much it affected himself. Compare Mrs. Quickly's speech in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, i. 4. 134: 'You shall have an fool's head of your own.'

107. *translated*, transformed. See i. 1. 191.

114. *The ousel cock*, the male blackbird. In the quartos and folios it is spelt 'woosell,' or 'woosel,' and is probably the same as Fr. *oiseau*, of which the old form was *oisel*. Cotgrave (Fr. Dict.) gives, 'Merle: m. A Mearle, Owsell, Blackbird. Merle noir. The Blackbird, or ordinarie

Owsell.' Florio (Ital. Dict.) has, 'Merlo, an Owsell, a Blackmacke, a Merle, or Blacke-bird.' In a note written by Douce he says, on the authority of Lewin's English Birds, that the ousel differs from the blackbird by having a white crescent on the breast. This is true of what is now called the ring ousel. Willoughby (Ornithology, B. ii. ch. 16) says, 'Of Blackbirds or Ouzels England breeds and feeds three kinds, 1. The Common Blackbird; 2. The Ring-Ouzels; 3. The Water-Ouzel.' In Breton's Arbor of Amorous Devises [1587] occur the two following lines which Steevens quotes from Capell's copy in Trinity College Library:

'The chattering Pie, the Iay, and eke the Quaile,
The Thrustle-Cock that was so blacke of hewe.'

115. *orange-tawny*. See i. 2. 85. This is descriptive of the colour of the bill of the male bird only, which is of a deep orange yellow. Compare Drayton, Polyolbion, xiii. 58:

'The Woosell neere at hand, that hath a golden bill.'

116. *The throstle*, or song-thrush. Compare The Merchant of Venice, i. 2. 65: 'If a throstle sing, he falls straight a capering.' Steevens quotes a passage from Thomas Newton's Herball to the Bible (p. 200) to show that the throstle and thrush are different birds: 'There is also another sort of myrte or myrtle which is wilde, whose berries the mauisses, throssels, owsels, and thrushes, delite much to eate.' But it proves no more than that 'throssel,' 'mavis,' and 'thrush,' were names indiscriminately used for the same bird; for a mavis or mavis to this day is a thrush in Suffolk, and Cotgrave (Fr. Dict.) has, 'Mauvis: f. A Mauis; a Throstle, or thrush.' In Willoughby's Ornithology (B. ii. ch. 17, § 2) is a section on 'The Mavis, Throstle, or Song-Thrush.' Compare Drayton's Shepherd's Garland, Eclogue iii. 67:

'The wosell and the throstle cock, chief musick of our May.'

120. *plain-song cuckoo*, so called from his monotonous note. The plain-song was the simple melody on which variations were made. Warton quotes from Skelton [Works, ed. Dyce, i. 64]:

'But with a large and a longe
To kepe iust playne songe
Our chanthers shalbe the cuckoue,
The culuer, the stockedowue.'

123. *would set his wit to so foolish a bird*, would match his wit against a cuckoo's. So Troilus and Cressida, ii. 1. 94: 'Will you set your wit to a fool's?'

127-129. In the folios and second quarto, line 129 precedes line 126.

128. *thy fair virtue's force*, the power of thy beauty.

134. *gleek*, jest, scoff. See Henry V, v. 1. 78: 'I have seen you gleeking and galling at this gentleman twice or thrice.' The substantive occurs in 1 Henry VI, iii. 2. 123:

'Now where's the Bastard's braves, and Charles his gleeks?'

Staunton remarks upon this: 'The all-accomplished Bottom is boasting of his versatility. He has shown, by his last profound observation on the disunion of love and reason, that he possesses a pretty turn for the didactic and sententious; but he wishes Titania to understand that, upon fitting occasion, he can be as waggish as he has just been grave.' But a 'gleek' is rather a satirical than a waggish joke, and in this vein Bottom flatters himself he has just been rather successfully indulging. In Jamieson's Scottish Dictionary 'Glaik' is defined as a glance of the eye, or a reflected gleam or glance in general. Hence 'to fling the glaiks in one's e'en' is to dazzle the eyes, throw dust in one's eyes, and so to cheat. Similarly 'to play the glaiks with one' is to cheat; and 'to get the glaiks' is to be cheated. With the derived sense of 'glaik' compare 'glance' in this play, ii. 1. 75.

140. *still*, ever, constantly. See iii. 2. 345, and The Merchant of Venice, i. 1. 136:

'And if it stand, as you yourself still do,
Within the eye of honour.'

Ib. tend upon, wait upon. So King Lear, ii. 1. 97:

'Was he not companion with the riotous knights
That tend upon my father?'

144. *jewels from the deep*. Steevens quotes from Richard III [i. 4. 31]:

'Reflecting gems—

Which woo'd the slimy bottom of the deep.'

To which may be added what occurs a few lines before:

'Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,
All scatter'd in the bottom of the sea.'

148. *Moth*. Mr. R. G. White regards this as equivalent to 'Mote' and prints it accordingly. No doubt 'mote' is commonly though not uniformly spelt 'moth' in the early editions of Shakespeare. For instance in Love's Labour's Lost, iv. 3. 161 the first folio has:

'You found his Moth, the King your Moth did see:
But I a Beame doe finde in each of three.'

See also the present play, v. 1. 306.

152. *apricocks*, the earlier and more correct spelling of 'apricots.' See note on Richard II, iii. 4. 29:

'Go, bind thou up yon dangling apricocks.'

The word has a curious history. In Latin the fruit was called *praecoqua* (Martial, Epig. xiii. 46), or *praecocia* (Pliny, II. N. xv. 11) from being early ripe; Dioscorides (i. 165) called it in Greek *πραικόκια*. Hence in Arabic it became *barquq* or *birquq*, and with the article *al-barquq* or *al-birquq*, Spanish *albarcoque*, Italian *albricocco* (Torriano), French *abricot*, and English *abricot*, *abricoet* (Holland's Pliny, xv. 11), *apricock*, or *apricot*.

Ib. dewberries, the fruit of the dewberry bush or blue bramble, of which the botanical name is *Rubus caesius*. None of these fruits of course are ripe when the action of the play is supposed to take place, and the same remark applies to them as to the flowers in ii. 2. 250.

156. *the fiery glow-worm's eyes*. Johnson thought that Shakespeare's observation was at fault, whereas he only uses the license of a poet. Compare Herrick's *Night-piece*, to Julia (*Hesperides*, ii. 7, ed. 1846):

'Her Eyes—the Glow-worme lend thee.'

157. *To have my love to bed and to arise*, to conduct him to his bed and to attend him when he rises. Compare *Comedy of Errors*, ii. 2. 10:

'Your mistress sent to have me home to dinner?'

And *Taming of the Shrew*, Ind. 2. 39:

'Or wilt thou sleep? we'll have thee to a couch.'

See also 2 *Kings* xi. 15: 'Have her forth without the ranges.'

161-164. The distribution of these speeches among the four fairies was made by Capell. The quartos and folios make but three speakers, giving 'Haile, mortall, haile' to the first.

165, &c. With this conversation of Bottom with the fairies Malone compares Lyly's *Maydes Metamorphosis*, in which there is a dialogue between some foresters and a troop of fairies:

'*Mopso*. I pray, Sir, what might I call you?

1 *Fai*. My name is Penny.

Mop. I am sorry I cannot purse you.

Frisco. I pray you, Sir, what might I call you?

2 *Fai*. My name is Cricket.

Fris. I would I were a chimney for your sake.'

168. *I shall desire you of more acquaintance*. The same construction is found in *The Merchant of Venice*, iv. 1. 402:

'I humbly do desire your grace of pardon.'

And in *As You Like It*, v. 4. 56: 'I desire you of the like.' Again in Chapman's *An Humorous Dayes Mirth* (*Works*, i. 55): 'I do desire you of more acquaintance.'

169. *if I cut my finger*, a cobweb being sometimes used to stanch blood.

172. *Squash*, an unripe peascod. Compare *Twelfth Night*, i. 5. 166: 'Not yet old enough for a man, nor young enough for a boy; as a squash is before 'tis a peascod.'

177. *your patience*, your endurance, what you have endured. There is no necessity to alter this, with Hanmer, to 'your parentage,' or with Farmer to 'your passions'; and Mason's 'I know you passing well' is feeble. Reed supposes the words to be spoken ironically, because mustard was thought to excite to anger. But what follows shows that they are used in their natural sense. The house of Mustard had endured much oppression from the giant Ox-beef.

179. *I promise you.* See l. 26.

180, 181. *your more acquaintance.* So the third and fourth folios. The other early copies read 'you more,' and Porson conjectured 'you of more' as above, which was adopted by Dyce in his second edition.

186. *love's.* Pope's correction. The quartos and folios read 'lovers,' which Malone contended was the true reading and to be pronounced as a monosyllable, as in *Twelfth Night*, ii. 4. 66:

'Sad true lover never find my grave.'

Steevens however maintained that here also 'true lover' was a mistake for 'true love.'

Scene II.

3. *in extremity*, in the highest degree, to the utmost, excessively.

5. *night-rule*, night-order, revelry, or diversion. 'Rule' is used in the sense of conduct in *Twelfth Night*, ii. 3. 132: 'Mistress Mary, if you prized my lady's favour at anything more than contempt, you would not give means for this uncivil rule.'

7. *close*, secret, private, retired. So 2 *Henry VI*, ii. 2. 3:

'Give me leave

In this close walk to satisfy myself.'

9. *patches*, fools, foolish fellows; used as a familiarly contemptuous term, as in *The Merchant of Venice*, ii. 5. 46. Shylock says of Launcelot:

'The patch is kind enough, but a huge feeder.'

It is probably derived from the Italian *pazzo*. See note on *The Tempest*, iii. 2. 63 (Clar. Press ed.). Patch was the name of Cardinal Wolsey's fool, whom he sent as a present to the king.

Ib. *mechanicals*, mechanics, artisans. Compare 2 *Henry VI*, i. 3. 196:

'Base dunghill villain and mechanical.'

13. *thick-skin*. So in *Merry Wives of Windsor*, iv. 5. 2: 'What wouldst thou have, boor? what, thickskin?'

Ib. *barren*, witless, stupid. Compare *Twelfth Night*, i. 5. 90: 'I marvel your ladyship takes delight in such a barren rascal: I saw him put down the other day with an ordinary fool that has no more brain than a stone.' And *Hamlet*, iii. 2. 46: 'For there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too.'

Ib. *sort*, company, crew. See *Richard II*, iv. 1. 246:

'And yet salt water blinds them not so much,

But they can see a sort of traitors here.'

And 2 *Henry VI*, iii. 2. 277:

'The lord ambassador

Sent from a sort of tinkers to the king.'

14. *Who Pyramus presented*, played the part of Pyramus. See iii. 1. 60.

15. *enter'd in.* In Shakespeare's time 'enter' was followed either by 'in' or 'into.' See iii. 1. 77, and Hamlet, iii. 4. 95 :

'These words, like daggers, enter in mine ears.'

Richard II, ii. 3. 160 :

'Unless you please to enter in the castle.'

17. *nole*, a grotesque word for head, like pate, noddle. The A. S. *hnoll*, knoll, the top of anything, is the same word. In the Wicliffite versions of Genesis xlix. 8, where the earlier has 'thin hondis in the skulles of thin enemyes,' the later has 'thin hondis schulen be in the nollis of thin enemyes'; the Latin being *cervicibus*. Probably 'nole,' like 'noddle,' was the back part of the head and so included the neck. Cotgrave has 'Occipital . . . belonging to the noddle; or hinder part of the head.' The following receipt is given in an English translation of Albertus Magnus de Secretis Naturae, printed at London by William Copland: 'If thou wilt that a man's head seeme an Asse head. Take vp of the couering of an Asse, & annoint the man on his head.' Much more elaborate directions are given in Scot's Discovery of Witchcraft, xiii. 19 (ed. 1584), quoted by Douce: 'Cutt off the head of a horsse or an asse (before they be dead) otherwise the vertue or strength thereof will be the lesse effectuall, and make an earthen vessell of fit capacitie to conteine the same, and let it be filled with the oile and fat therof; couer it close, and dawbe it over with lome: let it boile over a soft fier three daies continuallie, that the flesh boiled may run into oile, so as the bare bones may be seene: beate the haire into powder, and mingle the same with the oile; and annoint the heades of the standers by, and they shall seeme to haue horssees or asses heads.' A trick of this kind is attributed to that notable conjurer Dr. Faustus, whose history (c. 43) is referred to by Steevens and is printed in Thoms' Early English Prose Romances.

19. *mimic*, actor, player. The first quarto has 'Minnick,' the second 'Minnock,' which Johnson thought the right reading. But both are corruptions, the latter of the former, and the former of 'mimick.' Malone quotes from Decker's Guls Hornebooke (1609): 'Draw what troop you can from the stage after you; the mimicks are beholden to you for allowing them elbow room.' See also Herrick, The Wake (ii. 63):

'Morris-dancers thou shalt see,

Marian too in Pagentric:

And a Minnick to devise

Many grinning properties.'

20. *eye*, see; as below, l. 40, and Coriolanus, ii. 1. 226: 'Clambering the walls to eye him.'

Ib. in sort, in company. See l. 18.

21. *russet-pated*. 'Russet' in Shakespeare's time signified grey or ash-coloured, and perfectly describes the colour of the chough's or jackdaw's head. For want of evidence of this I adopted in a former edition, perhaps

too hastily, the reading 'russet-patted,' suggested by Mr. Bennett (*Zoological Journal*, v. 496), as descriptive of the red legs of the Cornish chough.

25. *at our stamp*, at hearing the footsteps of the fairies, which were powerful enough to 'rock the ground': see iv. 1. 85. Theobald proposed to read 'at our stump,' and Johnson actually substituted 'at a stump,' quoting from Drayton's *Nymphidia* [ed. 1631, p. 184]:

'A stump doth trip him in his pace,
Downe comes poore Hob vpon his face,
And lamentably tore his case,
Amongst the Bryers and brambles.'

26. *He*, used indefinitely for 'one,' as in Sonnet xxix. 6:

'Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possess'd.'

And *The Merchant of Venice*, iv. 1. 54, 55:

'Why he cannot abide a gaping pig,
Why he, a harmless necessary cat.'

32. *translated*. See iii. 1. 107.

36. *latch'd*. In the other passages where 'latch' is used by Shakespeare it has the sense of 'catch,' from A. S. *laccan*, or *gelaccan*. See *Macbeth*, iv. 3. 196:

'But I have words
That would be how'd out in the desert air,
Where hearing should not latch them.'

And *Sonnet cxiii*. 6, of the eye:

'For it no form delivers to the heart
Of bird, of flower, or shape, which it doth latch.'

Compare also Holland's *Pliny*, viii. 24, of the Ichneumon: 'In fight he sets up his taile, & whips about, turning his taile to theemie, & theriu latcheth and receiveth all the strokes of the Aspis, and taketh no harme thereby.' In the present passage 'latch'd' must signify caught and held fast as by a charm or spell, like the disciples going to Emmaus (*Luke* xxiv. 16):

'their eyes were holden, that they should not know him.' Hammer interprets it as 'lick'd over,' that is, smeared, anointed, from Fr. *licher*, but there appears to be no evidence for this meaning. On the other hand a 'latch-pau' in Suffolk and Norfolk is a dripping-pan, which catches the dripping from the meat; and Bailey gives 'latching' in the sense of catching, infectious; as it is still used in the North of England. With this compare

'taking' in *King Lear*, ii. 4. 166:

'Strike her young bones
You taking airs, with lameness!'

40. *of force, of necessity*. Compare *Julius Cæsar*, iv. 3. 203:

'Good reasons must, of force, give place to better.'

41. *close*, so as to be unobserved. See above, l. 7, and *Much Ado about Nothing*, iii. 3. 110: 'Stand thee close then under this penthouse.'

48. *Being o'er shoes in blood*. Steevens compares *Macbeth*, iii. 4. 136-138:

'I am in blood
Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er.'

Coleridge conjectured 'plunge in knee deep,' which Phelps adopted. The phrase 'over shoes' in the sense of moderately deep occurs in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, i. 1. 24:

'Pro. That's a deep story of a deeper love:
For he was more than over shoes in love.

Val. 'Tis true; for you are over boots in love,
And yet you never swum the Hellespont.'

50. *so true unto the day*. Compare *Troilus and Cressida*, iii. 2. 185:

'As true as steel, as plantage to the moon,
As sun to day, as turtle to her mate.'

53. *whole*, solid. Compare *Macbeth*, iii. 4. 22:

'I had else been perfect,
Whole as the marble, founded as the rock.'

57. *so dead*, so death-like. See *2 Henry IV*, i. 1. 71:

'Even such a man, so faint, so spiritless,
So dull, so dead in look, so woe-begone,
Drew Priam's curtain in the dead of night.'

58. *murder'd*. The quartos have 'murthered' and 'murdered,' the folios 'murderer.'

61. *sphere*, orbit. See ii. 1. 7. The epithet 'glimmering,' or faintly shining, seems in contradiction to 'bright' and 'clear' of the previous line.

62. *What's this to my Lysander?* what has this to do with him?

68. *once*, for once. So in *The Tempest*, iii. 2. 24: 'Moon-calf, speak once in thy life, if thou beest a good moon-calf.'

Ib. tell true, speak truth. So in *All's Well that Ends Well*, i. 3. 225:

'Count. Wherefore? tell true.

Hel. I will tell truth.'

And *Love's Labour's Lost*, iv. 1. 18:

'Here, good my glass, take this for telling true.'

So also 'say true' in *Twelfth Night*, ii. 5. 213; 'speak true,' *The Tempest*, iii. 1. 70.

70. *brave touch*, fine stroke, heroic exploit.

71. *a worm*, a serpent. Compare *Antony and Cleopatra*, v. 2. 243:

'Hast thou the pretty worm of Nilus there,
That kills and pains not?'

72. *doubler tongue*. See ii. 2. 9.

74. *a misprised mood*, a mistaken humour or caprice; a temper of mind arising from a mistake. 'You spend your passion on,' that is, in giving vent to this mistaken mood. So below, l. 90, 'misprision' is 'mistake.'

78. *An if*. See ii. 2. 153.

Ib. therefore, for that, thereby. So Troilus and Cressida, iii. 3. 20: 'Often have you thanks therefore.'

80, 81. *part I so*: See me &c. This is Pope's correction of the reading of the quartos and folios, which is 'part I, see me no more Whether &c.' with neither rhyme nor metre.

81. *whether*, a monosyllable, as in i. 1. 69.

85. *sleep*, misprinted 'slippe' in the first quarto, and 'slip' in the second and in the folios. Rowe corrected it.

87. *tender*, offer; keeping up the figure of debt and payment in the previous lines. Compare The Tempest, ii. 1. 194:

'Do not omit the heavy offer of it:
It seldom visits sorrow.'

90. *misprision*, mistake. See above, l. 74, and Much Ado about Nothing, iv. 1. 187:

'There is some strange misprision in the princes.'

92. *troth*. See ii. 2. 42. 'One man holding troth,' while one man keeps faith.

93. *confounding oath on oath*, breaking one oath after another. For 'confound' in the sense of 'ruin, destroy,' see Lucrece, 1202:

'My shame be his that did my fame confound.'

96. *fancy-sick*, love-sick. See i. 1. 155.

Ib. cheer, countenance; Fr. *chère*, Ital. *ciera*, or *cera*. Compare The Merchant of Venice, iii. 2. 314:

'Bid your friends welcome, shew a merry cheer.'

And 1 Henry VI, i. 2. 48:

'Methinks your looks are sad, your cheer appall'd';

that is, your countenance turned pale.

97. *sighs of love, that costs the fresh blood dear*. 'Costs' is here attracted into the singular by the word 'love' which comes between it and its subject. See notes on Hamlet, i. 2. 38, King Lear, iii. 6. 4, where the verb is plural instead of singular. The following from The Comedy of Errors, v. 1. 70, is exactly parallel to the present passage:

'The venom clamours of a jealous woman
Poisons more deadly than a mad dog's tooth.'

For the belief that sighs exhausted the blood, see Hamlet, iv. 7. 123:

'Like a spendthrift sigh,
That hurts by easing.'

And 2 Henry VI, iii. 2. 61 :

‘ Might liquid tears or heart-offending groans
Or blood-consuming sighs recall his life,
I would be blind with weeping, sick with groans,
Look pale as primrose with blood-drinking sighs.’

101. *the Tartar's bow*. Compare Romeo and Juliet, i. 4. 5 :

‘ Bearing a Tartar's painted bow of lath.’

Also Bacon's Advancement of Learning, Bk. II. xiv. 11 : ‘ Yet certain it is that words, as a Tartar's bow, do shoot back upon the understanding of the wisest.’ The Tartars were famous for their skill in archery, like the ancient Parthians. Douce quotes from Golding's translation of Ovid's Met. x. [fol. 128 b] :

‘ And though that she
Did fly as swift as Arrow from a Turkye bowe.’

103. *Cupid's archery*. See ii. 1. 165.

112. *mistook*. For this form of the participle see Hamlet, v. 2. 395.

114. *fond*. See ii. 2. 88. ‘ Their fond pageant,’ the foolish spectacle they present.

119. *sport alone*, to which nothing can be compared. See Twelfth Night, i. 1. 15 :

‘ So full of shapes is fancy
That it alone is high fantastical.’

And Antony and Cleopatra, iv. 6. 30 :

‘ I am alone the villain of the earth.’

124. *vows so born*, vows being so born.

127. *badge of faith*, in allusion to the badges of metal worn by servants and marked with a device to indicate the family to which they belonged. Compare Lucrece, 1054 :

‘ To clear this spot by death, at least I give
A badge of fame to slander's livery.’

And 2 Henry VI, v. 1. 201 :

‘ And that I'll write upon thy burgonet,
Might I but know thee by thy household badge.’

129. *When truth kills truth*. If Lysander's present protestations are true they destroy the truth of his former vows to Hermia, and the contest between these two truths, which in themselves are holy, must in the issue be devilish and end in the destruction of both.

133. *Will even weigh*, will counterbalance each other.

134. *as light as tales*, or idle words. There is the same contrast between truths and tales in Antony and Cleopatra, ii. 2. 136 :

‘ Truths would be tales,
Where now half tales be truths.’

138. *eyne*. See i. 1. 242.

141. *Taurus*, a lofty range of mountains in Asia Minor.

142. *Fann'd with the eastern wind*. Compare Winter's Tale, iv. 4. 375:

'I take thy hand, this hand,

As soft as dove's down and as white as it,

Or Ethiopian's tooth, or the fann'd snow that's bolted

By the northern blasts twice o'er.'

144. *This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss*. Steevens compares Antony and Cleopatra, iii. 13. 125:

'My playfellow, your hand; this kingly seal

And plighter of high hearts.'

And Staunton justifies his adoption of 'impress' for 'princess,' Mr. Collier's conjecture, by a reference to Beaumont and Fletcher, Double Marriage, iv. 3:

'May I not take this hand, and on it sacrifice

The sorrows of my heart? white seal of virtue!'

The quotation illustrates the present passage, but the change is unnecessary.

146. *To set against me*, attack me.

147. *civil*, polite, well-mannered. See ii. I. 152.

Ib. courtesy, good manners.

148. *injury*, not merely wrong, but insult. See ii. I. 147.

150. *join in souls*, combine heart and soul, join heartily. For this expression, the meaning of which is so clear, it has been proposed to read 'join in flouts,' 'join insolents,' 'join in soul,' 'join, ill souls,' 'join in sport,' 'join insults.'

153. *superfraise*, overpraise, praise to excess.

157. *a trim exploit*, a pretty achievement! 'Trim' is used many times by Shakespeare ironically. Compare 1 Henry IV, v. I. 137: 'What is honour? A word. What is in that word honour? what is that honour? air. A trim reckoning!'

159. *sort*, quality, kind. Compare 2 Henry IV, v. 2. 18:

'How many nobles then should hold their places,

That must strike sail to spirits of vile sort!'

Cotgrave has 'Gens de mise. Persons of worth, sort, qualitie.'

160, 161. *ex'ort A poor soul's patience*, wrest it from her, make her impatient. Compare Much Ado about Nothing, v. I. 102; 'We will not wake your patience.'

169. *I will none*, will none of her, desire her not. Compare Romeo and Juliet, iii. 5. 140:

'Ay, sir; but she will none, she gives you thanks.'

The full phrase occurs in 2 Henry IV, iii. 2. 271: 'And for your part, Bull-calf, grow till you come unto it: I will none of you.'

171. *to her*, in regard to her my heart was but as a sojourner. Johnson read 'with her.' Delius suggests that 'to her as guest-wise' is equivalent

to 'as a guest to her.' There are other instances of 'to' in Shakespeare in a sense not far different from that in the present passage. Compare Measure for Measure, i. 2. 186:

'Implore her, in my voice, that she make friends
To the strict deputy.'

Two Gentlemen of Verona, i. 1. 57:

'To Milan let me hear from thee by letters.'

Comedy of Errors, iv. 1. 49:

'You use this dalliance to excuse
Your breach of promise to the Porpentine.'

In all these cases the sense is quite clear, but there is a confusion in the construction. In the Devonshire dialect 'to' is frequently used for 'at,' and it is a common Americanism.

175. *aby it*, pay for it, atone for it. See below, l. 335, and Spenser, Fairy Queen, iv. 1. 53:

'Yet thou, false squire, his fault shalt deare aby.'

The folios read 'abide' in both passages, as does the second quarto here. There is another word 'aby,' in an entirely different sense, which is etymologically the same as 'abide'; but our word is from A.S. *abicgan*, to redeem. And 'abide,' which is synonymous with the former, is often confounded with the latter.

188. *oes*, circles, orbs. Compare Antony and Cleopatra, v. 2. 81: 'The little O, the earth.' Steevens quotes John Davies of Hereford's *Microcosmus*, 1605, p. 233:

'Which silver oes and spangles over-ran.'

Circular discs of metal which were used for ornaments were called 'oes.' See Bacon, Essay xxxvii. p. 157 (ed. Wright): 'And Oes, and Spangs, as they are of no great Cost, so they are of most Glory.'

195. *Injurious*, insulting. See ii. 1. 147.

196. *contrived*, plotted. Compare As You Like It, iv. 3. 135:

'Was't you that did so oft contrive to kill him?'

200. *chid*. So in l. 312. Shakespeare also uses 'chidden' as the participle of 'chide.' So Two Gentlemen of Verona, ii. 1. 12: 'And yet I was last chidden for being too slow.'

201. *O, is all forgot?* The verse is defective, as is frequently the case when there is a pause in the middle. To mend it the second and later folios read 'O, and is all forgot?' Malone, 'O, is all now forgot?' Reed, 'O, now is all forgot?' Mr. Spedding proposes the slightest change, 'O, is it all forgot?' But the broken line is suitable to the hurried ejaculations of *Hermia*.

202. *childhood innocence*. Compare The Merchant of Venice, i. 1. 144: 'I urge this childhood proof.'

203. *two artificial gods*, two gods exercising their creative skill in art; in this case the art of embroidery.

204. *needles*, a monosyllable; for which Steevens substituted the old form 'neelds.' But see Lucrece, 319:

'And griping it, the needle his finger pricks.'

And King John, v. 2. 157:

'Their thimbles into armed gauntlets change,
Their needles to lances, and their gentle hearts
To fierce and bloody inclination.'

206. *warbling of one song*. See i. 1. 231, Abbott, Shakespeare Grammar, § 178, and note on King Lear, ii. 1. 39 (Clar. Press ed.).

208. *incorporate*. See v. 1. 399.

213. *Two of the first, like coats in heraldry*. The quartos and folios read 'life' for 'like,' which Theobald substituted at the suggestion of Folkes. Shakespeare borrows the language of heraldry, in which, when a tincture has been once mentioned in the description of a coat of arms, it is always afterwards referred to according to the order in which it occurs in the description; and a charge is accordingly said to be 'of the first,' 'of the second,' &c., if its tincture be the same as that of the field which is always mentioned first, or as that of the second or any other that has been specified. Hence Douce's explanation is the correct one: 'Helen says, "we had two seeming bodies but only one heart." She then exemplifies her position by a simile—"we had two of the first, i. e. bodies, like the double coats in heraldry that belong to man and wife as one person, but which, like our single heart, have but one crest."'

215. *rent*, the old form of 'rend.' Compare A Lover's Complaint, 55:

'This said, in top of rage the lines she rents.'

It occurs also in several passages of the Authorised Version of the Bible, but has been modernised in later editions, and is only left in Jer. iv. 30.

220. *passionate*. So the folios. The quartos omit.

225. *even but now*, a redundant phrase, as in Hamlet, i. 1. 81.

237. *Ay, do, persever*. The first quarto reads 'I doe. Persever;' which Hunter maintains is the true reading, making Helena refer to what Hermia had said, 'I understand not,' &c. To which Helena replies, 'I do. Persever,' &c. The reading of the second quarto and of the folios is 'I, do, persever,' which is the same as that adopted in the text, 'I' being the common form of 'Ay' in the printing of Shakespeare's time.

Ib. persever, with the accent on the second syllable, as uniformly in Shakespeare. Compare King John, ii. 1. 421:

'Persever not, but hear me, mighty kings.'

Ib. sad. See ii. 1. 51, iv. 1. 94.

238. *Make mouths upon me*, make faces at me in scorn. See Hamlet, iv. 4. 50:

'Whose spirit with divine ambition puff'd
Makes mouths at the invisible event.'

239. *hold the sweet jest up*, keep it going, carry it on. Compare Merry Wives of Windsor, v. 5. 109:

'I pray you, come, hold up the jest no higher.'

And Much Ado about Nothing, ii. 3. 126; 'He hath ta'en the infection: hold it up;' that is, keep up the sport.

240. *well carried*, well managed. Compare Much Ado about Nothing, iv. 1. 212:

'Marry, this well carried shall on her behalf
Change slander to remorse.'

242. *such an argument*, a subject for such merriment. For 'argument' in this sense see Much Ado about Nothing, i. 1. 258: 'Well, if ever thou dost fall from this faith, thou wilt prove a notable argument.'

250. *prayers*. The reading of Theobald. The quartos and folios have 'praise.' Capell, at Theobald's suggestion, read 'prays,' a noun formed from the verb in accordance with Shakespeare's usage. So 'entreats' for 'entreaties,' 'exclaims' for 'exclamations.'

252. *by that*, by my life.

257. *Ethiophe*. Hermia, like Rosaline in Love's Labour's Lost, was a brunette, as we learn from the banter that goes on with Biron, iv. 3. 266-268:

'*Dum*. To look like her are chimney-sweepers black.
Long. And since her time are colliers counted bright.
King. And Ethiopes of their sweet complexion crack.'

257, 8. *No, no; he'll . . . Seem, &c.* This is substantially the reading of the quartos; the first has

'No, no; heele
Seeme to breake loose,' &c.

The second,

'No, no, hee'l seeme to breake loose,'

as one line. The folios, also as one line, read,

'No, no, sir, seem to break loose.'

Other readings which have been proposed are Pope's,

'No, no, he'll seem

To break away';

Capell's,

'No, no, he'll not come.—

Seem to break loose;'

Malone's, combining the quartos and folios,

'No, no; he'll—sir,

Seem to break loose';

which was slightly modified by Steevens,

'No, no; sir: he will

Seem to break loose.'

Unless a line has fallen out, the reading in the text gives as good a sense as

any. Demetrius first addresses Hermia, and then breaks off abruptly to taunt Lysander with not showing much eagerness to meet him. Demetrius follows the folios, 'No, no, Sir:—Seem,' &c., and regards the whole as addressed to Lysander, the first words being a remonstrance with him for his insulting language to Hermia.

259. *you are a tame man*, a spiritless, cowardly fellow. Compare Merry Wives of Windsor, iii. 5. 153: 'Though what I am I cannot avoid, yet to be what I would not shall not make me tame.'

Ib. go, be off with you: an exclamation of impatience. See Henry V, v. 1. 73: 'Go, go; you are a counterfeit cowardly knave.' And Romeo and Juliet, i. 5. 88: 'You are a princex, go.'

260. *thou cat*, used as a term of contempt, as in Coriolanus, iv. 2. 34:

'Twas you incensed the rabble:

Cats, that can judge as fitly of his worth

As I can of those mysteries which heaven

Will not have earth to know.'

272. *what news?* what has happened? what is the matter? Compare i. 1. 21: 'What's the news with thee?' And Hamlet, i. 2. 42:

'And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?'

Singer quite unnecessarily reads 'what means my love?'

274. *erewhile*, a short time since, just now. So in As You Like It, ii. 4. 89: 'That young swain that you saw here but erewhile.'

279. An Alexandrine. Pope reads 'doubt' for 'of doubt.'

282. *juggler*, a trisyllable.

Ib. cankerblossom is generally taken to mean a blossom eaten by a canker, having a show of fairness but hollow within. But it is probably a compound formed like 'kill-courtesy' (ii. 2. 77), 'kill-joy,' and is equivalent to 'blossom-cankerer'; Hermia comparing Helena to a canker that has stealthily eaten into and destroyed Lysander's love for her.

286. *touch*, delicate feeling. Compare Richard III, i. 2. 71:

'No beast so fierce but knows some touch of pity.'

And see note on The Tempest, v. 1. 21.

290. *compare*, comparison. So Venus and Adonis, 8:

'The field's chief flower, sweet above compare.'

For examples of verbs formed from substantives see note on 'exclaims,' Richard II, i. 2. 2.

292. *personage*, figure. See Twelfth Night, i. 5. 164: 'Of what personage and years is he?'

296. *thou painted maypole*. Stow, in his Survey of London (ed. Thoms, p. 54), gives an account of the great maypole in Cornhill, which when set up on the south side of the church of St. Andrew Undershaft, was higher than the church steeple. Steevens quotes from Stubbes' Anatomie of Abuses (p. 94, ed. 1585): 'But their cheefest iewell they bring from thence is their

Maie poole, whiche they bring home with greate veneration, as thus. They haue twentie, or fourtie yoke of Oxen, euey Oxe hauyng a sweete Nosegaie of flowers, tyed on the tippe of his hornes, and these Oxen drawe home this Maie poole (this stinckying Idoll rather) which is couered all ouer with Flowers, and Hearbes bounde rounde aboute with stringes, from the top to the bottome, and sometyme painted with variable colours, with twoo or three hundred men, women, and children followyng it, with greate deuotion.'

300. *curst*, spiteful, mischievous; used of a woman who is a scold. So in *The Taming of the Shrew*, i. 1. 186: 'Her eldest sister is so curst and shrewd.' Also applied to animals, as in *Much Ado about Nothing*, ii. 1. 22: 'For it is said, God sends a curst cow short horns.' Cotgrave defines 'Meschant. Wicked, impious, vngracious . . . also, curst, mischieuous, harsh, froward.'

302. *a right maid*, a true maid. Compare *Antony and Cleopatra*, iv. 12. 28: 'Like a right gipsy.'

310. *your stealth*, your stealing away, going secretly. Compare iv. 1. 159, and *Sonnet lxxvii. 7*:

'Thou by thy dial's shady stealth mayst know
Time's thievish progress to eternity.'

314. *so*, provided that. See *The Merchant of Venice*, iii. 2. 197:

'With all my heart, so thou canst get a wife.'

317. *foud*. See ii. 2. 88.

323. *shrewd*, mischievous, especially with the tongue. See ii. 1. 33, and *Much Ado about Nothing*, ii. 1. 20: 'Thou wilt never get thee a husband, if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.'

324. *vixen*, properly a she-fox; hence applied to an ill-tempered spiteful woman. The form of the word is especially interesting as being the only instance in which the feminine termination -en has been preserved. See *Morris, English Accidence*, c. x. § 73. It occurs in Anglo-Saxon as *fixen*, and in German as *füchsin*.

327. *flout*. See ii. 2. 128.

329. *minimus*, smallest thing.

Ib. hindering knot-grass. The common knot-grass (*polygonum aviculare*) was formerly believed to have the power of checking the growth of children. See *Beaumont and Fletcher, the Coxcomb*, ii. 2:

'We want a boy extremely for this function,

Kept under for a year with milk and knot-grass.'

And *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, ii. 2: 'The child's a fatherless child, and say they should put him into a strait pair of gaskins, 'twere worse than knot-grass; he would never grow after it.'

330. *You bead*. As beads were generally black, there is a reference here to *Hermia's* complexion as well as to her size.

333. *intend*, pretend. *Demetrius* does not think *Lysander* in earnest.

Compare Much Ado about Nothing, ii. 2. 35: 'Intend a kind of zeal both to the prince and Claudio.' And The Taming of the Shrew, iv. 1. 216:

'Ay, and amid this hurly I intend
That all is done in reverend care of her.'

335. *aby*. See l. 175.

337. *Of mine or thine*. Compare The Tempest, ii. 1. 28: 'Which, of he or Adrian, for a good wager, first begins to crow?' And see the note on that passage (Clar. Press ed.).

338. *cheek by jole*, side by side, close together, as the cheek to the jole or jaw. 'Jole' is from A. S. *ceafst*.

339. *coil*, disturbance, turmoil. See The Tempest, i. 2. 207:

'Who was so firm, so constant, that this coil
Would not infect his reason?'

Ib. 'long of you, owing to you. Compare Love's Labour's Lost, ii. 1. 119:

'Tis 'long of you that spur me with such questions.'

340. *I repeated for emphasis*, as in Two Gentlemen of Verona, v. 4. 132:

'Sir Valentine, I care not for her, I.'

And Romeo and Juliet, iii. 1. 58:

'I will not budge for no man's pleasure, I.'

341. *curst*. See l. 300.

345. *still*. See iii. 1. 141.

351. 'nointed, anointed. So in Winter's Tale, iv. 4. 813: 'He has a son, who shall be flayed alive; then 'nointed over with honey, set on the head of a wasp's nest.'

352. *sort*, turn out, result. Compare Much Ado about Nothing, iv. 1. 242:

'And if it sort not well, you may conceal her.'

And 2 Henry VI, i. 2. 107:

'Sort how it will, I shall have gold for all.'

353. *As*, inasmuch as.

356. *welkin*, sky; A. S. *wolcen*, cloud. See Lucrece, 116:

'No cloudy show of stormy blustering weather
Doth yet in his fair welkin once appear.'

357. *Acheron*, the river of hell in classical mythology, supposed by Shakespeare to be a pit or lake. Compare Macbeth, iii. 5. 15:

'And at the pit of Acheron
Meet me i' the morning.'

Titus Andronicus, iv. 3. 44:

'I'll dive into the burning lake be'ow
And pull her out of Acheron by the heels.'

359. *As*, that. Compare Hamlet, ii. 1. 95 (Clar. Press ed.):

'He raised a sigh so piteous and profound
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk';

where the quartos read 'As,' the folios 'That.'

360. *sometime*. See ii. 1. 38; iii. 1. 98.

361. *wrong*, reproach, insult. Compare King John, iii. 1. 200:
‘Well, ruffian, I must pocket up these wrongs.’

364. *death-counterfeiting sleep*. Compare Cymbeline, ii. 2. 31:
‘O sleep, thou ape of death, lie dull upon her!’

367. *virtuous property*, healthful, beneficial quality. Compare 2 Henry IV,
iv. 5. 76:

‘Culling from every flower
The virtuous sweets.’

For ‘virtue’ in the sense of ‘power, efficacy,’ see Romeo and Juliet, ii. 3.
13, of the herbs gathered by Friar Laurence,

‘Many for many virtues excellent.’

And The Merchant of Venice, v. 1. 199:

‘If you had known the virtue of the ring.’

Compare also Milton, Il Penseroso, 113:

‘And who had Canacé to wife,
That own’d the virtuous ring and glass.’

And Comus, 621:

‘Well skill’d
In every virtuous plant and healing herb.’

372. *wend*, go. See Measure for Measure, iv. 3. 150: ‘Wend you with
this letter.’ And Comedy of Errors, i. 1. 158, where it is used as in the
present passage for the rhyme:

‘Hopeless and helpless doth Ægeon wend,
But to procrastinate his lifeless end.’

374. *Whiles*, while. See As You Like It, ii. 7. 128.

Ib. employ. So the first quarto: the second has ‘apply,’ and the folios
‘imply.’

379. *night’s swift dragons*. Compare Cymbeline, ii. 2. 48:

‘Swift, swift, you dragons of the night!’

And Troilus and Cressida, v. 8. 17:

‘The dragon wing of night o’erspreads the earth.’

Milton perhaps had this passage in his mind when he wrote, Il Penseroso, 59:

‘While Cynthia checks her dragon-yoke
Gently o’er the accustom’d oak.’

On which Keightley remarks it is wrong mythology, ‘for Demeter, or Ceres,
alone had a dragon yoke.’ Drayton also (The Man in the Moon, 431) says
that Phoebe

‘Calls downe the Dragons that her chariot drawe.’

380. *Aurora’s harbinger*, the morning star. Douce quotes from Milton’s
Song on May Morning what is evidently a reminiscence of this:

‘Now the bright morning-star, Day’s harbinger,
Comes dancing from the East.’

381. See Hamlet, i. 1. 150-156.

383. The bodies of those who had committed suicide were buried in crossways, with a stake driven through them.

Ib. floods, rivers; or perhaps any large bodies of water as opposed to land. The word is used of the sea in this play ii. 1. 127, and in the sense of 'river' it is found in Joshua xxiv. 15: 'The gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood'; that is, the river Euphrates. Steevens says the ghosts of self-murderers and of those who were drowned 'were condemned (according to the opinion of the ancients) to wander for a hundred years, as the rites of sepulture had never been regularly bestowed on their bodies.'

384. *their wormy beds.* Milton remembered this in his lines On the Death of a Fair Infant, 31:

'Or that thy beauties lie in wormy bed.'

385. *upon.* For the transposition of the preposition compare All's Well that Ends Well, iii. 4. 6:

'That barefoot pled I the cold ground upon.'

387. *black-brow'd night.* Compare King John, v. 6. 17:

'Why, here walk I in the black brow of night,
To find you out.'

389. *the morning's love.* Cephalus, with whom Oberon had hunted. Compare Milton, Il Penseroso, 124, of the Morn:

'Not trick'd and frowned, as she was wont
With the Attic boy to hunt.'

402. *drawn,* that is, with sword drawn. Compare The Tempest, ii. 1. 308: 'Why are you drawn?'

416. The folios here give the stage direction, 'Shifting places.'

421. *Ifo, ho, ho!* A taunting cry, which, according to Ritson in his note on the passage, is uttered by Puck as his usual exclamation, having forgotten the part he was assuming. It is quite true that in an old ballad on Puck, printed by Percy (Reliques, iii. Bk. ii. 25), the stanzas all end with 'Ho, ho, ho!' but there is nothing so exceptional in the cry as to make it inappropriate to Puck in an assumed character.

422. *Abide me,* wait for me, that we may encounter. From this sense of 'waiting for' comes the further sense of awaiting the issue of an event, as in 2 Henry IV, ii. 3. 36:

'To abide a field

Where nothing but the sound of Hotspur's name
Did seem defensible.'

And Cymbeline, iii. 4. 186:

'This attempt

I am soldier to, and will abide it with
A prince's courage.'

Ib. well I wot, well I know. See iv. 1. 163.

426. *Thou shalt buy this dear.* Johnson conjectured 'by' for 'aby,' as in ll. 175, 335, but the phrase, if a corruption, was so well established in Shakespeare's time as to make a change unnecessary. Compare, for instance, 1 Henry IV, v. 3. 7:

'The Lord of Stafford dear to day hath bought
Thy likeness.'

And 2 Henry VI, ii. 1. 100:

'Too true; and bought his climbing very dear.'

Besides, the two words are etymologically connected. See note on l. 175.

432. *Shine comforts,* cause comforts to shine. Theobald reads 'Shine, comforts,' &c. Or it may be simply 'let comforts shine,' &c.; just as below we have 'And sleep . . . steal me awhile,' &c.

433. *That I may back.* For the omission of the verb of motion before 'to' or an adverb of direction see ii. 1. 164, and iv. 1. 22: 'I must to the barber's, mounsieur.' Also note on Hamlet, iii. 3. 4.

439. *curst.* See l. 300.

461. Steevens refers to Heywood's Epigrams on Three Hundred Proverbs, 12:

'All shalbe well, Iacke shall haue Gill:
Nay nay, Gill is wedded to wyll.'

See also Love's Labour's Lost, v. 2. 805:

'Our wooing doth not end like an old play;
Jack hath not Jill.'

'The man shall have his mare again' seems to have been a proverbial expression, implying that all would be right in the end. Compare Fletcher, The Chances, iii. 4:

'Fred. How now? How goes it?

John. Why, the man has his mare again, and all's well, Frederic.'

ACT IV.

Scene I.

1. Johnson remarks, 'I see no reason why the fourth Act should begin here, when there seems no interruption of the action.'

2. *amiable,* lovely. Compare Psalm lxxxiv. 1, 'How amiable are thy tabernacles!' And Milton, Paradise Lost, iv. 250:

'Others whose fruit, burnish'd with golden rind,
Hung amiable.'

The word is now used only of persons.

Ib. coy, coax, caress. Steevens quotes from Warner's *Albion's England*, vi. 30:

'And whilst she coyces his sooty Cheekes, or curles his sweaty top.'

And from Golding's *Ovid*, vii. (fol. 79 *b*, ed. 1603):

'Their dawning Dew-laps with his hand he coyed vnfearefully.

The verb is formed from the adjective, which is itself derived from the French *coy* or *quoy*, the representative of the Latin *quietus*.

15. *overflown*, flooded and drowned. Compare *Titus Andronicus*, iii. 1. 230:

'Then must my earth with her continual tears
Become a deluge, overflow'd and drown'd.'

18. *neaf*, fist; spelt in the quartos and first folios 'neafe': corrupted in the later folios to 'newfe,' 'newse,' and finally 'news.' In *2 Henry IV*, ii. 4. 200, it occurs again: 'Sweet knight, I kiss thy neif.' It is found in Early English in the form 'neve' or 'nefe.' See *Havelok the Dane*, 2405:

'With þe neue he robert sette
Biforn þe teth a dint ful strong.'

The Old Norse word is *hnefi* (Swedish *näfve*; Dan. *næve*). See Jamieson's *Scottish Dictionary*, s. v. *Neive*.

19. *leave your courtesy*; that is, put on your hat, be covered. Compare *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. 1. 103: 'I do beseech thee, remember thy courtesy: I beseech thee, apparel thy head.'

22. *Cobweb*. Grey says, 'Without doubt it should be Cavalero Peas-blossom; as for cavalero Cobweb, he had just been dispatched upon a perilous adventure.'

Ib. *I must to the barber's*. See iii. 2. 433.

23. *marvellous*. See note on iii. 1. 2.

27. *the tongs and the bones*. After this the folios have the stage direction, 'Musicke Tongs, Rurall Musicke.'

31. *a great desire to*. The same construction is found in *Pericles*, iv. 1. 44:

'Well, I will go;
But yet I have no desire to it.'

Ib. *a bottle of hay*, a bundle or truss of hay. The common proverb is well known of the search for anything hard to find, that it is like looking for a needle in a bottle of hay. Baret (*Alvearie*, s. v.) has, 'a Bottle of hay. Fasciculus vel manipulus fœni': and again, 'To binde vp hay in bottles. Fœnum in manipulos vincire & colligare.' Compare Florio (*Ital. Dict.*): 'Gregnè, sheafes of corne, handfuls of flowers, wads of straw, bottles of hay.' And *Cotgrave* (*Fr. Dict.*): 'Boteau, A bundle, or bottle, as of hay, &c.'

34. Steevens reads 'hoard' as a disyllable, for the sake of the metre which such a reading utterly destroys. Hanmer has 'fetch thee thence' and Sidney

Walker suggested 'fetch thee the new nuts.' But in the distinct enunciation of 'fetch thee' the time of a syllable is gained, as in the case of 'moon's' (ii. 1. 7), and 'night's' (iv. 1. 95).

37. *exposition*, for 'disposition.'

39. *be all ways away*, disperse yourselves in every direction. The quartos and folios have 'always' variously spelt, which Theobald corrected to 'all ways.'

40. *So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle* &c. Strictly speaking 'woodbine' and 'honeysuckle' are the same, and in consequence various readings and modes of punctuating this passage have been proposed. Warburton suggested,

'So doth the woodbine, the sweet honeysuckle,
Gently entwist the maple; ivy so
Enrings,' &c.

Upton would read 'woodrine,' that is, the bark of the wood, instead of 'woodbine'; and Steevens says, 'Were any change necessary, I would not scruple to read *weedbind*, i. e. *smilax*.' Johnson thought that 'woodbine' was the plant, and 'honeysuckle' the flower, and the same distinction is apparently made in Baret's *Alvearie*, 'Woodbin that beareth the Honiesuckle.' But this last-quoted passage perhaps only indicates that 'woodbine' was a name for many climbing plants, one of which was the honeysuckle. As a matter of fact it is to this day used in Suffolk to denote the large white convolvulus, and Boswell is correct in saying that 'in many of our counties, the *woodbine* is still the name for the great convolvulus.' Gifford quotes a very parallel passage from Ben Jonson's *Vision of Delight*:

'Behold

How the blue bindweed doth itself infold
With honeysuckle !'

The word only occurs in two other passages of Shakespeare, viz. in the present play, ii. 1. 251, where it is called 'luscious woodbine,' an epithet which is appropriate to the honeysuckle; and in *Much Ado about Nothing*, iii. 1. 30, where 'the woodbine coverture' is the same as

'The pleached bower,

Where honeysuckles, ripen'd by the sun,
Forbid the sun to enter.'

Supported by these instances, Steevens interprets the present passage thus: 'So the woodbine, i. e. the sweet honeysuckle, doth gently entwist the barked fingers of the elm, and so does the female ivy enrings the same fingers.' But the word 'entwist' seems to describe the mutual action of two climbing plants, twining about each other, and I therefore prefer to consider the woodbine and the honeysuckle as distinct, the former being the convolvulus, rather than to adopt a construction and interpretation which do violence to the reader's intelligence. Mr. R. G. White finds no difficulty, because in

America what are called the woodbine and honeysuckle are commonly found twining round each other; but it appears from his description that he calls woodbine what we call honeysuckle, and that the honeysuckle of America is the trumpet honeysuckle, which is not indigenous in this country, and was unknown in Shakespeare's time. It is moreover instructive to observe, as shewing how loosely the word is used, that the term 'woodbine' in America is sometimes applied to the Virginia creeper. See Bartlett's Dictionary of Americanisms.

Ib. the female ivy, so called because it is as it were married to the elm; as Catullus says of the vine, *lxii. 54*:

'Ulmo conjuncta marito.'

Compare Fairfax's Tasso, *iii. 75*:

'The married Elme fell with his fruitfull vine.'

And Milton, *Paradise Lost, v. 215-217*:

'Or they led the vine

To wed her elm; she spoused about him twines

Her marriageable arms.'

47. favours, the reading of the first quarto and last folio: the others have 'savours.' For 'favours' see *ii. 1. 12*.

50. rounded, encircled. Compare *Richard II, iii. 2. 161*:

'The hollow crown

That rounds the mortal temples of a king.'

And *Macbeth, iv. 1. 88*: 'the round and top of sovereignty.'

53. orient pearls, bright, shining pearls. So *The Passionate Pilgrim, 133*:

'Bright orient pearl, alack, too timely shaded!'

The epithet appears to be originally applied to the pearl and other gems as coming from the orient or east, and to have acquired the general sense of bright and shining from the objects which it most commonly describes. Compare *Milton, Paradise Lost, i. 546*:

'Ten thousand banners rise into the air,

With orient colours waving.'

54. flowerets', spelt 'flouriets' in the quartos and folios.

59. her fairy, her chief attendant fairy. See *ii. 1. 61*. Dyce, here as in the former passage, reads 'fairies.' It may be that in *ii. 1. 61* Titania gives the order to the fairy who was in immediate attendance, and that Capell is right in supposing the change unnecessary.

65. the other, plural: as in *Venus and Adonis, 1102*:

'The birds such pleasure took,

That some would sing, some other in their bills

Would bring him mulberries and ripe-red cherries.'

And *The Merchant of Venice, i. 1. 54*:

'And other of such vinegar aspect.'

66. May all, that is, they may all, &c. See *v. 1. 69*, *Abbott, § 399*.

72. *Dian's bud*,* if it has a botanical existence at all, may be, as Steevens suggests, the bud of the *Agnus castus*, or Chaste Tree, of which it is said in Macer's Herball, 'The vertue of this herbe is, that he wyll kepe man and woman chaste.' But it is more probably a product of Shakespeare's imagination, which had already endued 'Cupid's flower,' the heart's ease, with qualities not recognized in botany. Steevens's suggestion is indeed supported by Chaucer; see *The Flower and the Leaf*, 472-5:

'That is Diane, goddesse of chastite,
And for because that she a maiden is,
In her hond the braunch she beareth this,
That *agnus castus* men call properly.'

Ib. o'er, Thirlby's correction, adopted by Theobald. The quartos and folios have 'or.'

81. *Than common sleep . . . sense*. The quartos and first two folios read 'sleepe: of all these, fine the sense'; which was further altered in the third and fourth folios to 'sleep: of all these find the sense'; and by Rowe to 'sleep. Of all these fine the sense.' The correction is Theobald's, and was made independently by Thirlby, 'these five' being the five sleepers.

85. *rock the ground*, like a cradle.

86. *are new in amity*, are again friends. It is difficult to say whether 'new' is here an adjective or adverb. Probably the latter, as in *Hamlet*, ii. 2. 510:

'Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work.'

For 'amity' (Fr. *amitié*) see *The Merchant of Venice*, iii. 2. 30:

'There may as well be amity and life
'Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love.'

89. *prosperity*. So the first quarto. The other early copies have 'posterity,' which Monck Mason defends by referring to Oberon's blessing in v. 1. 410 &c. But see ii. 1. 73.

94. *sad*, grave, serious. See iii. 2. 237.

95. *night's*, a disyllable, as 'moon's' in ii. 1. 7, and 'earth's' in *The Tempest*, iv. 1. 110:

'Earth's increase, foison plenty.'

The first quarto reads 'nights,' the second quarto and the folios 'the night's.'

103. *our observation*. The 'observance to a morn of May' spoken of in i. 1. 167. See below, l. 131.

104. *the vaward*, the vanguard (Fr. *avantgarde*), or advanced guard of an army, and hence, the early part of the day. In this metaphorical sense it occurs in 2 *Henry IV*, i. 2. 199: 'And we that are in the vaward of our youth, I must confess, are wags too.' For the literal meaning see *Henry V*, iv. 3. 130:

'My lord, most humbly on my knee I beg
'The leading of the vaward.'

108. *We will, fair queen, uf &c.* See iii. 2. 433.

112. *they bay'd the bear.* Hammer substituted 'boar' for 'bear'; but the references to 'bear' and 'bear-hunting' in Shakespeare are sufficiently numerous to justify the old reading, without going into the naturalist's question whether there are bears in Crete. See for instance Venus and Adonis, 884 :

'For now she knows it is no gentle chase,

But the blunt boar, rough bear, or lion proud.'

Besides, according to Pliny (viii. 83), there were neither bears nor boars in the island. We may therefore leave the natural history to adjust itself, as well as the chronology which brings Cadmus with Hercules and Hippolyta into the hunting field together. To 'bay,' which signifies to bark, or bark at, is used technically for 'to bring to bay,' that is, to drive the animal pursued to turn upon his pursuers. Compare Julius Cæsar, iii. 1. 204: 'Here wast thou bay'd, brave hart.' And as 'graft' is a corruption of 'graff,' and 'hoist' of 'hoise,' so 'bait' may be a corruption of 'bay.' Cotgrave has 'Abbay: m. a barking, or baying of a dogge': and 'Aux derniers abbois. At his last gaspe, or, breathing his last; also, put to his last shifts, driuen to vse his last helpes: A metaphor from hunting; wherein a Stag is sayd, Rendre les abbois, when wearie of running, he turnes vpon the hounds, and holds them at, or puts them to, a bay.'

113. *hounds of Sparta.* The Spartan hounds were celebrated for their swiftness and quickness of scent. Compare Virgil, Georgics, iii. 405 :

'Veloces Spartæ catulos acremque Molossum

Pasce sero pingui.'

And see Sophocles, Ajax, 8; Callimachus, Dian. 94. Compare also the description of Actæon's dogs in Ovid's Metamorphoses, iii. (Golding's translation, ed. 1603, fol. 33 a):

'His Hounds espyde him where he was, and Blackfoote first of all

And Stalker speciall good of sent began aloud to call.

This latter was a hound of Crete, the other was of Sparta.'

And Gorges' translation of Lucan's Pharsalia, iv. p. 144 :

'And therewithall in cooples clogges

His Spartane, and his Cretan dogges.'

114. *Chiding*, used of noise simply, as in *As You Like It*, ii. 1. 7 :

'As the icy fang

And churlish chiding of the winter's wind';

where however the word has also somewhat of the sense of rebuke or scolding. Compare 1 Henry IV, iii. 1. 45 :

'Clipp'd in with the sea

That chides the banks of England, Scotland, Wales';

that is, dashes noisily against. So Henry VIII, iii. 2. 197 :

'As doth a rock against the chiding flood.'

119. *so flew'd.* The flews of a hound are the large overhanging chaps. Warton quotes from Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, iii. (fol. 33 b, ed. 1603):

'And shaggie Rugges with other twaine that had a Sire of Crete,
And Dam of Sparta: Tone of them callde Iolly-boy, a great
And large flewd hound.'

Ib. so sanded, of such a sandy colour.

120. Steevens quotes inaccurately from Heywood's *Brazen Age* [ii. 2, Works iii. p. 190]:

'The fierce Thessalian hounds
With their flagge eares, ready to sweep the dew
From the moist earth.'

121. *dewlapp'd.* See ii. 1. 50.

122. *match'd in mouth like bells.* Compare Markham's *Country Contentments*, p. 6: 'If you would have your Kennel for sweetness of cry, then you must compound it of some large dogs, that have deep solemn Mouths, and are swift in spending, which must as it were bear the base in the consort; then a double number of roaring, and loud-ringing Mouthes, which must bear the counter-tenor; then some hollow plain sweet Mouths, which must bear the mean or middle part; and so with these three parts of Musick, you shall make your cry perfect.'

Ib. mouth, used of the bark of a dog. Compare *Venus and Adonis*, 695: 'Then do they spend their mouths.' And *1 Henry VI*, ii. 4. 12:

'Between two dogs, which hath the deeper mouth.'

130. *I wonder of* &c. We should now say 'I wonder at,' but as 'at' marks the object of the wonder, so 'of' is used with that in respect of which the wonder is excited. Compare *Timon of Athens*, iii. 4. 10: 'I wonder on't'; where 'on't' = of it. So below, l. 135, 'of' = concerning.

131-132. *to observe The rite of May.* Compare i. 1. 167. The quartos and folios have 'right' for 'rite.' See note on *The Tempest*, iv. 1. 96 (Clar. Press. ed.).

133. *in grace of,* in honour of. Compare *Hamlet*, i. 2. 124:

'In grace whereof,
No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell.'

Id. solemnity. See i. 1. 11.

140. Capell adds the stage-direction, 'He and the rest kneel to Theseus.'

144. *To sleep* &c. For the omission of 'as' after 'so' see Abbott, § 281, *As You Like It*, ii. 3. 7, and *The Merchant of Venice*, iii. 3. 10.

145. *amazedly,* confusedly; in a state of astonishment or confusion of mind. Compare the stage direction in *The Tempest*, v. 1. 215, and *Winter's Tale*, v. 1. 187:

'I speak amazedly; and it becomes
My marvel and my message.'

146. *Half sleep, half waking.* Some editors regard 'sleep' and 'waking' as adjectives, and print the former 'sleep'=asleep. Dr. Schmidt, in his Shakespeare Lexicon, p. 1419, col. 1, gives this as an instance of the same termination applying to two words, so that 'sleep and waking'=sleeping and waking. He quotes, as a possibly parallel case, *Troilus and Cressida*, v. 8. 7:

'Even with the veil and darking of the sun.'

In this case however 'veil' may be a substantive formed from a verb, of which there are many instances in Shakespeare. I am inclined to think that both 'sleep' and 'waking' are here substantives, and are loosely connected with the verb 'reply'; just as we find in *Merry Wives of Windsor*, iii. 2. 69, 'He speaks holiday'; *Twelfth Night*, i. 5. 115; 'He speaks nothing but madman'; *King John*, ii. 1. 462, 'He speaks plain cannon fire,' and as the folios read in *As You Like It*, iii. 2. 226, 'Speak sad brow and true maid.'

152. *Without*, beyond the reach of. Compare *The Tempest*, v. 1. 271:

'And deal in her command without her power';

that is, exercise the moon's influence to a greater extent than she has the power to use it. Dyce reads the sentence as incomplete,

'Where we might,

Without the peril of the Athenian law—'

The first quarto has only a comma at 'law,' but we cannot lay much stress upon this. The second quarto and the folios read 'where we might be,' but 'where we might' is simply 'wheresoever we might.'

153. *you have enough*, that is, you have enough evidence to convict him by his own confession.

159. *their stealth*, their stealing away. See iii. 2. 310.

162. *fancy*. See i. 1. 155.

163. *I wot not*, I know not. See iii. 2. 422. 'Wot' is properly a preterite (A. S. *wit*, from *witan* to know), and is used as a present, just as *oīda* in Greek and *novi* in Latin. And not only is it used as a present in sense, but it is inflected like a present tense, for we find the third person singular 'wots' or 'wotteth.'

165. *Melted as the snow*. Pope, for the sake of the metre, read 'Is melted as the snow'; Capell, 'Melted as doth the snow.' Staunton conjectured, 'All melted as the snow.'

166. *gawd*. See i. 1. 33.

170. *saw*. So Steevens. The quartos and folios have 'see.'

171. *like in sickness*. Farmer's correction, adopted by Steevens. The quartos and folios have 'like a sickness.' I am not satisfied with this reading, and the repetition of 'But' inclines me to suspect that there is a further corruption.

181. *for*, because. Compare Sonnet liv. 9 :

‘But, for their virtue only is their show,
They live unwoo’d and unrespected fade.’

Ib. worn, exhausted, consumed, wasted; used of time, as in v. i. 33, and Coriolanus, ii. i. 77: ‘You wear out a good wholesome forenoon in hearing a cause between an orange-wife and a fosset-seller.’

190. *like a jewel*, as one finds a jewel which does not belong to him. Warburton conjectured ‘gemell’ (from Lat. *gemellus*, a twin, because Demetrius had that night acted two such different parts), which was not too absurd to be adopted by Theobald and commended by Johnson. Demetrius is not compared to a jewel, but the finding of him to the finding of a jewel.

191-192. *Are you sure That we are awake?* These words are in the quartos, but are omitted in the folios. The defective metre has been variously supplied.

195. *Yea* here is the answer to a question framed in the negative, contrary to the rule laid down by Sir Thomas More, according to which it should be ‘yes.’

199. The quartos have no stage direction. The folios give ‘Bottom wakes.’

202. *God’s my life*. This exclamation is put into the mouth of Dogberry in *Much Ado about Nothing*, iv. 2. 72: ‘God’s my life, where’s the sexton?’

205. *go about*, endeavour. Compare *Lucrece*, 412 :

‘Who, like a foul usurper, went about
From this fair throne to heave the owner out.’

207. *a patched fool*, a motley fool (*As You Like It*, ii. 7. 13), a pied ninny (*The Tempest*, iii. 2. 71); so called from the parti-coloured dress worn by jesters. See note on ‘patch,’ iii. 2. 9.

208. Douce has pointed out that this is Bottom’s blundering version of 1 Corinthians ii. 9.

215. *at her death*; that is, at Thisbe’s death: for though Thisbe is not mentioned, Bottom’s head is full of the play. Theobald conjectured ‘after death,’ which is certainly ingenious and may be right.

Scene II.

4. *transported*, transformed, transfigured; in Starveling’s language this is equivalent to ‘translated’ in iii. i. 107. Dr. Schmidt takes the word to be seriously used, in the sense of removed from this world to the next, killed (euphemistically), as in *Measure for Measure*, iv. 3. 72 :

‘And to transport him in the mind he is
Were damnable.’

5-6. *it goes not forward*, does not go on, take place. So in *As You Like It*, i. 2. 193: ‘We will make it our suit to the duke that the wrestling might not go forward.’ And *Merry Wives of Windsor*, iv. 4. 13: ‘But let our plot go forward.’

8. *discharge*. See i. 2. 84.

14. *a thing of naught*. So the second and later folios. The quartos and first folio have 'a thing of nought.' The two words 'naught,' signifying worthlessness, good-for-nothingness, and 'nought' nothing, are etymologically the same, but the different senses they have acquired are distinguished in the spelling.

17. *we had all been made men*, our fortunes had all been made. Compare *The Tempest*, ii. 2. 31: 'There would this monster make a man; any strange beast there makes a man.' And *Twelfth Night*, ii. 5. 168: 'Go to, thou art made, if thou desirest to be so.'

22. *sixpence a day*. Steevens supposes that Shakespeare may allude to some actor, who, like Preston the author of *Cambyses*, was pensioned for his abilities on the stage.

Ib. in Pyramus, in the part of Pyramus. Compare *Twelfth Night*, i. 5. 168: 'Tis with him in standing water, between boy and man'; that is, he is in the condition of standing water.

23. *where are these hearts?* these good fellows. So in *Twelfth Night*, ii. 3. 16: 'How now, my hearts!'

24. *courageous*. It is not worth while to guess what Quince intended to say. He used the first long word that occurred to him without reference to its meaning, a practice which is not yet altogether extinct.

26. *I am to discourse wonders*. We should now say 'I have to discourse,' a form of phrase corresponding with, if not borrowed from, the French idiom. Dr. Abbott (*Shakespearian Grammar*, § 405) quotes from Florio's translation of Montaigne, p. 3: 'That ancient Painter who being to represent the griefe of the bystanders &c.,' where the original is 'ayant à représenter.' In Latin the construction would be represented by using the participle in *-dus*. Compare *The Merchant of Venice*, i. 1. 5:

'But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
I am to learn.'

And *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, iii. 1. 59:

'I am to break with thee of some affairs.'

28. *right*, exactly.

30. *good strings to your beards*, to tie the false beards on with. Steevens thought these strings were something ornamental, but there appears to be no ground for supposing this.

34. *preferred*, offered for acceptance; if Bottom's words have a meaning, which is not always certain. Compare *Julius Caesar*, iii. 1. 28:

'Let him go,
And presently prefer his suit to Caesar.'

ACT V.

Scene I.

2. *may*, can. Compare *The Merchant of Venice*, i. 3. 7: 'May you stead me?' that is, can you assist me?

3. *toys*, trifles. Compare *Love's Labour's Lost*, iv. 3. 170:
'And critic Timon laugh at idle toys.'

4. *such seething brains*, such hot boiling brains, full of wild imaginations. Compare *Winter's Tale*, iii. 3. 64: 'Would any but these boiled brains of nineteen and two-and-twenty hunt this weather?' Delius quotes from *Macbeth*, ii. 1. 39:

'A false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain.'

5. *that apprehend* &c., that slightly catch at, as it were, or conceive the idea of more than reason can ever fully grasp or contain.

8. *compact*, formed, composed; literally, fastened or knit together. Compare *Venus and Adonis*, 149: 'Love is a spirit all compact of fire.' And *Psalm cxxii*. 3: 'Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together.'

11. *a brow of Egypt*, a swarthy brow, like a gipsy's. So in *Othello*, iii. 4. 56, 'Egyptian' is used for gipsy:

'That handkerchief
Did an Egyptian to my mother give;
She was a charmer, and could almost read
The thoughts of people.'

14. *bodies forth*, gives them a bodily existence.

21. *fear*, cause or object of fear.

26. *constancy*, consistency, reality.

27. *howsoever*, nevertheless, in any case. So in *Troilus and Cressida*, iii.

3. 297: 'If tomorrow be a fair day, by eleven o'clock it will go one way or other: howsoever, he shall pay for me ere he has me.'

Ib. admirable, to be wondered at. So 'admired' is used in *Macbeth*, iii. 4. 110:

'You have displaced the mirth, broke the good meeting,
With most admired disorder.'

30. *More (joy) than to us* &c.

31. *Wait in*, unnecessarily changed to 'wait on' by Rowe. See note on ii. 1. 85.

34. *our after supper*, or rear-supper; not the time after supper, as it is usually explained, but a banquet so called which was taken after the meal. So in *Richard III*, iv. 3. 31:

'Come to me, Tyrrel, soon at after supper.'

Cotgrave has 'Regoubillonet. To make a reare supper, steale an after

supper; banquet late anights.' And Palsgrave (*Lesclaircissement de la langue Francoyse*) gives 'Rere supper—banquet.'

38. *Philostrate*, the master of the revels. See i. 1. 11. So the quartos: the folios have 'Egeus.' Probably the same actor played both parts.

39. *abridgement*, an entertainment to make the time pass quickly. Used in *Hamlet*, ii. 2. 439, in a double sense, the entry of the players cutting short Hamlet's talk: 'For look, where my abridgement comes.' Steevens quotes from Gawin Douglas's prologue to his translation of the fifth book of the *Aeneid*:

'Ful mony myrry abaytmentis followis heir';

where 'abaitment' is clearly the same as the French 'esbatement,' which Cotgrave defines 'A sporting, playing, dallying, ieasting, recreation.'

41. *the lazy time*, which moves so slowly, and in which we are idle.

42. *a brief*, a short statement, containing the programme of the performance. Compare *Antony and Cleopatra*, v. 2. 138:

'This is the brief of money, plate, and jewels,
I am possessed of.'

Cotgrave (*Fr. Dict.*) has: 'Bref . . . A breefe, note, short writing.'

Ib. ripe, ready for representation. So the first quarto. The second quarto and folios read 'rife,' a mere misprint.

44. In the folios the reading from the brief is given to Lysander and the comments to Theseus. There is no such distinction in the quartos.

Ib. The battle with the Centaurs. Told by Nestor in the twelfth book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The version by Theseus was different, for Nestor purposely omitted all mention of Hercules.

48. The death of Orpheus is told by Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, xi.

52. *The thrice three Muses*, &c. Warton suggested 'that Shakespeare here, perhaps, alluded to Spenser's poem, entitled *The Tears of the Muses*, on the neglect and contempt of learning. This piece first appeared in quarto with others, 1591.' It was supposed by Knight that the death of Greene may be here referred to, which took place in 1592.

54. *critical*, censorious; as Iago says of himself in *Othello*, ii. 1. 120: 'For I am nothing, if not critical.'

55. *not sorting with*, or agreeing with, not befitting. So 3 *Henry VI*, v. 5. 26:

'His currish riddles sort not with this place.'

56. See note on i. 2. 11.

59. Pope settled the difficulty in this line by omitting it altogether. Warburton read 'a wondrous strange shew.' Many other solutions have been proposed, none of them absolutely satisfactory; as 'strange black snow' (Upton), 'strong snow' (Mason), 'seething snow' (Collier MS.), 'swarthy snow' (Staunton), 'staining snow' (Nicholson), 'sable snow' (Elze), 'wind-restraining snow' (Wetherell), and finally Sir Philip Perring has suggested

to me 'strange! hot snow,' or 'strange! jet snow.' From the words as they stand Steevens extracts a certain sense. He says 'The meaning of the line is—"hot ice, and snow of as strange a quality."' But there is no such antithesis between 'strange' and 'snow' as between 'hot' and 'ice,' and this is what is required.

69. *Made mine eyes water.* We must supply 'it' as the nominative; that is, the seeing of the play rehearsed. For this ellipsis see *As You Like It*, i. 1. 2, v. 4. 167, *The Merchant of Venice*, i. 1. 98, and *Abbott*, § 399.

74. *unbreathed*, untrained, unpractised. Hamlet says (v. 2. 181), 'Tis the breathing time of day with me'; that is, the time for taking exercise.

75. *nuptial*. With only two exceptions Shakespeare always uses the singular form of this word. See note on i. 1. 125.

79. *their intents* seems to be used in connexion with the following line, both for the endeavour and the object of the endeavour. Their intents or endeavours have been strained to the utmost to learn their parts which they have conned or studied with cruel pain. *Delius* makes l. 79 parenthetical, and connects l. 80 with 78; the play being 'extremely stretch'd' or spun out.

80. *conn'd* is the technical word for studying a part for the stage. See i. 2. 90.

83. *simpleness*, simplicity, innocence. *So Much Ado about Nothing*, iii. 1. 70:

'So turns she every man the wrong side out,
And never gives to truth and virtue that
Which simpleness and merit purchaseth.'

90. *to take*. See ii. 2. 46.

91, 92. *And what poor duty*, &c. *Theobald* read

'And what poor willing duty cannot do,
Noble respect,' &c.

The defective metre has been amended by reading 'cannot do aright' (*Seymour*), 'cannot do, yet would' (*Coleridge*). *Johnson* interprets the passage thus, 'What the inability of duty cannot perform, regardful generosity receives as an act of ability, though not of merit'; but he thinks the contrary is rather true, and would read, 'takes not in might, but merit.' There is no need for change; the sense being, noble respect or consideration accepts the effort to please without regard to the merit of the performance. Compare *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. 2. 517:

'That sport best pleases that doth least know how,' &c.

Steevens takes 'might' as an elliptical expression for 'what might have been,' but this does not seem likely.

93. *clerks*, scholars, learned men; learning having been at one time almost confined to the clergy. Compare *Pericles* v. Prologue 5: 'Deep clerks she dumbs'; that is, she puts to silence profound scholars.

96. *periods*, full stops.

105. *to my capacity*, so far as I am able to understand.

106. *address'd*, ready, prepared. Compare Julius Caesar, iii. 1. 29:

'He is address'd: press near and second him.'

And 2 Henry IV, iv. 4. 5:

'Our navy is address'd, our power collected.'

107. Steevens quotes the following passage from Dekker's *Guls Hornbook*, c. vi. (1609) to show that the prologue was anciently ushered in by trumpets: 'Present not yourselfe on the stage (especially at a new play) until the quaking prologue hath (by rubbing) got cullor in his cheekes, and is ready to give the trumpets their cue that hee's upon point to enter.'

118. *doth not stand upon points*, is not very particular, with a reference to his not minding his stops. Compare 3 Henry VI, iv. 7. 58:

'Why, brother, wherefore stand you on nice points?'

For a similar joke compare Roister Doister's letter to Mistress Custance (Roister Doister, iii. 3).

120. *the stop*, a term in horsemanship; used here in a punning sense. Compare A Lover's Complaint, 109:

'What rounds, what bounds, what course, what stop he makes!'

122. *a recorder*, a kind of flageolet, or flute with a mouthpiece. See note on Hamlet, iii. 2. 262 (Clar. Press ed.).

123. *in government*. So Hamlet in giving directions for playing on the recorder (iii. 2. 372) says, 'Govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb.'

125. The folios have here the stage direction 'Tawyer with a Trumpet before them,' where 'Tawyer' looks like a misprint for 'Players,' unless it is the name of the actor who played the part of prologue.

129. *certain*. A most convenient word for filling up a line and at the same time conveying no meaning. Instances of its occurrence are common, and to those given by Steevens may be added from Sir Generydes (Early Eng. Text Soc.), 4693:

'Sir Amelok hath a daughter certayn.'

130. *present*. See iii. 1. 60.

136. *think no scorn*, not disdain. See 2 Henry VI, iv. 2. 13: 'The nobility think scorn to go in leather aprons.' And Love's Labour's Lost, i. 2. 66: 'I think scorn to sigh.'

137. *Ninus' tomb*. See Golding's Ovid, iv. fol. 44 a:

'They did agree at Ninus Tombe to meet without the towne.'

138. *hight*, was called; here used as an intentional archaism, as in Love's Labour's Lost, i. 1. 171:

'This child of fancy that Armado hight.'

It was in common use in old writers, and is equivalent to the Germ. *heissen*; A. S. *hútan*; Goth. *haitan*.

139. Malone supposes a line to be lost, as there is no rhyme to 'name.'

141. *fall*, let fall. Compare *The Tempest*, ii. 1. 296:

'And when I rear my hand, do you the like,
To fall it on Gonzalo.'

145, 146. Shakespeare ridicules the alliteration which the poetasters of his day affected. It was an exaggeration of the principle upon which Anglo-Saxon verse was constructed, and comes again under his lash in *Love's Labour's Lost*, iv. 2. 57-59, where Holofernes composes an 'extemporal epitaph' on the death of the deer, which is intentionally alliterative: 'I will something affect the letter, for it argues facility.

The playful princess pierced and prick'd a pretty pleasing pricket;

Some say a sore; but not a sore, till now made sore with shooting.'

151. *be to speak*. See iv. 2. 26.

155. *Snout*. So the folios. The quartos have 'Flute,' but he played the part of Thisbe.

157. Compare Golding's *Ovid*, iv. fol. 43 b:

'The wall that parted house from house had riuen therein a cranie.'

160. *Ioam*. See iii. 1. 61. Reed substitutes 'lime,' as in l. 130.

162. *sinister*, left; used by *Snout* for two reasons; first, because it is a long word, and then because it gives a sort of rhyme to 'whisper.'

165. *partition*. Farmer says, 'I believe the passage should be read: This is the wittiest partition, that ever I heard in discourse. Alluding to the many stupid partitions in the argumentative writings of the time.'

175. *eyne*. See i. 1. 242 &c.

176. *Jove shield thee*. See iii. 1. 31.

183. *cue*. See iii. 1. 67.

184. *pat*. See iii. 1. 2.

190. *I see a voice*. See iii. 1. 82.

195. *Limander*. Johnson has pointed out that *Limander* and *Helen* are blunders for *Leander* and *Hero*, as *Shafalus* and *Procrus* are for *Cephalus* and *Procris*. Capell takes *Limander* to be for *Lisander*, and this for *Alisander*, *Alexander* or *Paris*.

201. '*Tide life, tide death*, whether life or death betide.

204. *Now is the mural down*. This is Pope's emendation of the reading of the folios, 'Now is the morall downe.' The quartos have 'Now is the Moon vsed.' Mr. Grant White thinks the wall is called a 'moral' because it acted as a restraint upon the lovers. The folio reading is evidently corrupt, and Pope's emendation so far as I am aware has no evidence in its favour. Perhaps the quarto reading 'Now is the Moon vsed' is a corruption of a stage direction, and the reading of the folios may have arisen from an attempt to correct in manuscript the words in a copy of the quarto by turning 'Moon' into 'Wall,' the result being a compound having the beginning of one word and the end of the other. If there were any

evidence for the existence of such a word as 'mural' used as a substantive, it would be but pedantic and affected and so unsuited to Theseus. Having regard therefore to the double occurrence of the word 'wall' in the previous speech and its repetition by Demetrius, I cannot but think that Theseus said 'Now is the wall down between the two neighbours,' just as Bottom says later on, 'The wall is down that parted their fathers.'

205. *So wilful to hear.* See Abbott § 28t for examples of the omission of 'as.'

212, 213. *Here come two noble beasts, in a man and a lion.* This is the punctuation of the quartos and folios which has been altered in modern editions by putting the comma after 'in,' but as I think unnecessarily. 'In' here signifies 'in the character of'; see iv. 2. 22. Theobald with great plausibility reads 'in a moon and a lion'; as Theseus says a few lines lower down 'let us listen to the moon.'

219. *A lion fell, nor else no lion's dam.* Johnson explains this by supposing 'neither' to be omitted before 'a lion fell.' Compare Sonnet lxxxvi. 9:

'He nor that affable familiar ghost.'

Again Sonnet cxli. 9:

'But my five wits nor my five senses can
Dissuade one foolish heart from serving thee.'

And Antony and Cleopatra, iv. 15. 52:

'The miserable change now at my end
Lament nor sorrow at.'

Rowe read 'No lion fell,' and another emendation is 'A lion-fell' or 'A lion's fell,' that is, a lion's skin.

221. *'twere pity on my life.* See note on iii. 1. 39.

224, 225. 'Valour' and 'discretion' are associated as in the proverb (1 Henry IV, v. 4. 121): 'The better part of valour is discretion.'

239. *the greatest error of all the rest.* Compare the often-quoted lines of Milton, Paradise Lost, iv. 323, 4:

'Adam the goodliest man of men since born
His sons, the fairest of her daughters Eve.'

And Bacon's Essay Of Envy (ed. Wright, p. 35): 'Of all other Affections, it is the most importune, and continuall.' See Abbott § 409, where it is given as an instance of the confusion of two constructions.

243. *it is already in snuff.* Demetrius as a professed joker quibbles upon the word 'snuff.' 'To take in snuff' is to take offence; and 'to be in snuff' is to be offended. See Love's Labour's Lost, v. 2. 22, where there is the same pun:

'You'll mar the light by taking it in snuff.'

244. *awearry, weary.* Compare The Merchant of Venice, i. 2. 2: 'By

my troth, Nerissa, my little body is aweary of this great world.' Tennyson has made the word familiar to modern ears in his song of Mariana :

'She said, I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead.'

258. *moused*, torn in pieces; as a cat tears a mouse.

259, 260. These lines are arranged according to Mr. Spedding's suggestion. In the old copies they stand thus:

'Dem. And then came Pyramus.

Lys. And so the lion vanished.'

Both Demetrius and Lysander speak in the past tense, as if they were telling the story of Pyramus and Thisbe. Farmer proposed, and his emendation was adopted by Steevens:

'Dem. And so comes Pyramus.

Lys. And then the moon vanishes.'

263. *gleams*. The quartos and first folio have 'beames,' which must be a misprint. This was amended in the later folios to 'streams'; but the alliteration shews that 'gleams' is the true reading, which was suggested by Knight.

264. The folios read here 'I trust to taste of truest Thisbies sight,' which is quite in keeping with 'I see a voice' &c. in l. 190.

275. *thrum* is the loose end of a weaver's warp, and is used of any coarse yarn. Warner says, 'the maids now call a mop of yarn a thrum-mop.' The 'thrummed hat' of the fat woman of Brentford (*Merry Wives of Windsor*, iv. 2. 80) was made of coarse tufts. 'Thread and thrum' was used as an expression for everything in general. So Herrick (*Hesperides*, i. 100):

'Thou who wilt not love, do this;
Learne of me what Woman is.
Something made of thred and thrumme;
A meere Botch of all and some.'

276. *quell*, destroy; A. S. *cwellan*. In *Macbeth*, i. 7. 72, it is used as a substantive for 'murder.' In the Wicliffite versions of Acts xxviii. 4, 'man-quellere' is equivalent to 'manslayer.'

277. *This passion, and the death of a dear friend*. The annotator of the Perkins Folio, with singular want of humour, changed this to 'this passion on the death of a dear friend.' For 'passion' in the sense of violent expression of sorrow, see l. 303 and *Hamlet*, ii. 2. 587:

'What would he do
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have?'

279. *Beshrew my heart*. See ii. 2. 54.

283. *cheer*. See iii. 2. 96. Here it signifies 'cheerfulness.' Compare *Hamlet*, iii. 2. 174:

'But woe is me, you are so sick of late,
So far from cheer and from your former state.'

284. *confound*, destroy, ruin. In this sense it is used in the Authorised Version of the Bible. See Jeremiah i. 17, where the marginal note to 'confound' is 'break to pieces,' and the rendering in the Geneva and Bishops' Bibles is 'destroy.'

And compare Macbeth, ii. 2. 12 :

'The attempt and not the deed
Confounds us.'

287, 288. Steevens again calls attention to the broad pronunciation which must have been given to the 'a' in Shakespeare's time to make 'pap' and 'hop' a passable rhyme. See note on ii. 1. 263.

296. *die*. There is the same play upon words in Timon of Athens, v. 4. 34-35 :

'And by the hazard of the spotted die
Let die the spotted.'

300. *How chance*. See i. 1. 29.

303. *passion*. See l. 277.

306. *A mote*. Spelt 'moth' in the quartos and folios. The same spelling occurs in three of the early quartos of Hamlet, i. 1. 112; and Love's Labour's Lost, iv. 3. 161, stands in the first folio thus :

'You found his Moth, the King your Moth did see:
But I a Beame doe finde in each of three.'

Compare also Much Ado about Nothing, ii. 3. 56-59 :

'*Balth*. Note this before my notes ;

There's not a note of mine that's worth the *noting*.'

D. Pedro. Why, these are very crotchets that he speaks ;

Note, notes, forsooth, and *nothing*.'

Theobald reads 'noting.' On the other hand, in More's Utopia, p. 59 (ed. Arber), we find 'moth-eaten' spelt 'moughteaten.'

307, 8. *he for a man . . . bless us*. Omitted in the folios, probably in consequence of the Act of 3 James I for restraining the abuses of players, which imposed a fine of ten pounds on any who should 'jestingly or prophanely speak, or use the holy name of God.'

307. *God warrant us*. The quartos have 'warnd,' which may stand for 'warn' or 'warrant,' for both expressions are used. See As You Like It, iv. 1. 77 : 'And for lovers lacking—God warn us!—matter, the cleanliest shift is to kiss.' And in the same play, iii. 3. 5 : 'Your features! Lord warrant us! what features?'

310. *And thus she means*. Theobald altered 'means' to 'moans,' which does not fit in well with 'videlicet.' Ritson maintained that 'means' is here used in the sense of 'complains,' like the old word 'mene' which is of common occurrence; and so it occurs in a phrase which according to

Mr. Pinkerton is employed in petitions to the Lords of Session in Scotland, which runs, 'To the lords of council and session humbly means and shows your petitioner.'

317, 318. *These lily lips* &c. To mend the rhyme Theobald read 'lily brows.' Mr. Collier adopts the correction of the Perkins Folio, 'This lily lip, This cherry tip.' Farmer conjectured 'These lips lily, This nose cherry.' Steevens quotes from Peele's *Old Wives Tale* (1595) a parallel to this nonsense: 'Her corall lippes, her crimson chinne.—Thou art a flouting knave—Her corall lippes her crimson chinne!'

327. *shore*, for 'shorn.' The rhyme is too much for 'Thisbe's grammar.' 'Shore' is used elsewhere in Shakespeare for the preterite of 'Shear.'

331. *imbrue*, make bloody, stain with blood. The word is evidently used for purposes of alliteration and not in its strict sense; but an almost parallel instance occurs in *Titus Andronicus*, ii. 3. 222:

'Lord Bassianus lies embrewed here.'

339. *a Bergomask dance*. Hamner explains this 'as a dance after the manner of the peasants of Bergomasco, a country of Italy, belonging to the Venetians. All the buffoons in Italy affect to imitate the ridiculous jargon of that people, and from thence it became a custom to mimick also their manner of dancing.' If we substitute Bergamo for Bergomasco his explanation is correct. Alberti (*Dizionario Universale*) says that in Italian 'Bergamasca' is a kind of dance, so called from Bergamo or from a song which was formerly sung in Florence. The Italian Zanni (our 'zany') is a contraction for Giovanni in the dialect of Bergamo, and is the nickname for a peasant of that place.

340. *No epilogue*, which was generally an apology for the play. See *The Tempest*, *As You Like It*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, 2 *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *Henry VIII*.

342. *writ*. The common form of the preterite in Shakespeare, who seldom uses 'wrote.' See *As You Like It*, v. 2. 84:

'To show the letter that I writ to you.'

344. *discharged*, performed. See i. 2. 84.

351. *palpable-gross*, the grossness or roughness of which is palpable.

352. *The heavy gait*, or slow progress. 'Gait' is now used of the manner of walking. Compare *Venus and Adonis*, 529:

'Look, the world's comforter, with weary gait,
His day's hot task hath ended in the west.'

And *Richard II*, iii. 2. 15: 'heavy-gaited toads.'

353. *Solemnity*. See i. 1. 11.

356. *behows*. So Theobald. The quartos and folios have 'beholds.' Compare *As You Like It*, v. 2. 119: 'Tis like the howling of Irish wolves against the moon.'

358. *fordone*, exhausted. The first quarto has 'foredoone'; the second

and the folios 'fore-done.' 'For' in composition is like the German *ver-*, and has sometimes a negative and sometimes an intensive sense. See note on Hamlet, ii. 1. 103.

360. *the screech-owl.* Compare Macbeth, ii. 2. 3, 4 :

'It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bellman,
Which gives the stern'st good-night.'

And see the note on that passage. Theobald pointed out that Marston in his Antonio and Mellida (Second Part, iii. 3) has imitated this speech :

'Now barkes the wolfe against the fulle cheekt moon;
Now lyons half-clamd entrals roare for food;
Now croakes the toad, and night crowes screech aloud,
Fluttering 'bout casements of departed soules;
Now gapes the graves, and through their yawnes let loose
Imprison'd spirits to revisit earth.'

And Malone quotes from Spenser's Fairy Queen, i. 5. 30, a passage which may possibly have been in Shakespeare's memory and is certainly parallel to this. The poet is describing Night.

'And, all the while she stood upon the ground,
The wakefull dogs did never cease to bay;
As giving warning of th' unwonted sound,
With which her yron wheelles did them affray,
And her darke griesly looke them much dismay:
The messenger of death, the ghastly owle,
With dreery skriekes did also her bewray;
And hungry wolves continually did howle
At her abhorred face, so filthy and so fowle.'

363. *Now it is the time of night &c.* Steevens quotes from Hamlet, iii. 2. 406 :

'Tis now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawn.'

368. *the triple Hecate's team.* So in Golding's Ovid, vii. fol. 79 *b* (ed. 1603) :

'By triple Hecats holy Rites.'

Compare As You Like It, iii. 2. 2 : 'thrice crowned queen of night'; as ruling in heaven, on earth, and in the underworld. See also Drayton, The Man in the Moon, 476-478 :

'So the great three most powerfull of the rest,
Phæbe, Diana, Hecate, do tell,
Her domination in heauen, in earth and hell.'

Hecate is always a disyllable in Shakespeare, except in 1 Henry VI, iii. 2. 64. See note on King Lear, i. 1. 101 (Clar. Press edition).

370. See iv. 1. 95.

371. *frolie, merry.* Compare Cotgrave (Fr. Dict.): 'loyeux : m. euse : 1.

loyfull, ioyous, glad, merrie, iocond, blithe, buxome, frolicke, iollie, cheerefull, pleasant, gamesome.' And 'Gaudir. To be frolicke, liuelie, iollie, pleasant, merrie; gybe, ieast; play the good fellow, make good cheere.'

374. *To sweep the dust behind the door*, where it would be likely to escape notice. Robin Goodfellow was believed to help good housemaids in their work, and to punish those who were sluttish. Compare Herrick (*Hesperides*, vol. i. p. 270):

'Sweep your house: Who doth not so,
Mab will pinch her by the toe.'

375. Johnson suggests that Milton may have had this picture in his thought when he wrote (*Il Penseroso*, 79),

'Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom.'

378. *as bird from brier*. A frequent comparison in the old poets. Steevens quotes from Minot (ed. Ritson), p. 31:

'That are was blith als brid on breere.'

380. *dance it*. For 'it' used indefinitely as the object of a verb, without any antecedent, see Abbott, § 226. Compare 'daub it' in *King Lear*, iv. 1. 54, and 'outface it,' *As You Like It*, i. 3. 124.

385. Oberon's speech, which is assigned to him in the quarto editions, is called in the folios 'The Song,' and printed in italics. Johnson, who restored it to Oberon, supposes that two songs are lost, one led by Oberon, the other by Titania.

387, 388. The blessing of the bridal bed was one of the ancient ceremonies of marriage. Steevens quotes from Chaucer, *The Marchantes Tale* (ed. Tyrwhitt), l. 9693:

'And whan the bed was with the preest yblessed.'

Compare also *The Romans of Partenay, or Melusine* (ed. Skeat), ll. 1009-11:

'Forsoth A Bisshop which that tyme ther was
Signed and blissid the bedde holyly;
"In nomine dei" so said in that place.'

389. *create*. See note on l. 399 below.

393. *the blots of Nature's hand*, like the 'vicious mole of nature' (*Hamlet*, i. 4. 24), were attributed to malignant fairies.

396. *prodigious*, monstrous, portentous. Compare *King John*, iii. 1. 46:

'Full of displeasing blots and sightless stains,
Lame, foolish, crooked, swart, prodigious,
Patch'd with foul moles and eye-offending marks.'

399. *consecrate*, consecrated, sacred. This form of participle in words derived from the Latin is of frequent occurrence. Compare *Sonnet lxxiv*. 6:

'When thou reviewest this, thou dost review
The very part was consecrate to thee.'

Similarly we find 'create,' 'dedicate,' 'excommunicate,' 'incorporate.'

400. *take his gait*, take his way or course. Compare King Lear, iv. 6. 242: 'Go your gait'; though this is intentionally rustic language. Steevens quotes from Lawrence Minot, p. 50:

'Take thi gate unto Gines,
And grete tham wele thare.'

The phrase is familiar in the dialect of the northern counties.

403, 404. These lines are arranged as by Staunton. In the quartos and folios they stand thus:

'Ever shall in safety rest,
And the owner of it blest.'

Delius supposes the relative pronoun 'which,' referring to the palace, to be omitted before 'Ever.' Rowe reads 'Ever shall it safely rest'; and Malone, 'E'er shall it in safety rest.'

413. *reprehend*, censure, blame. Compare Venus and Adonis, 1065:

'And then she reprehends her mangling eye.'

416. *unearned luck*, good fortune which we have not deserved.

419. *If we 'scape the serpent's tongue*, that is, without being hissed. Steevens quotes from Markham's English Arcadia (1607): 'But the nymph, after the custom of distressed tragedians, whose first act is entertained with a snaky salutation,' &c.

421. *Give me your hands*, that is, applaud by clapping. Compare All's Well that Ends Well, v. 3. 340:

'Your gentle hands lend us, and take our hearts.'





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